



# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Draft

October, 2013

BFJ Planning



# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT [DRAFT]

**Prepared on behalf of:**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 The Planning Process and the Plan of Conservation and Development**

The foundation of a planning process is the ability of a municipality to reflect upon its past, to appraise its present and to formulate plans for the future. The process itself results in a comprehensive planning document that serves as a long-range guide to future development of the town. Of crucial importance to the planning process are review and modification as needed, and an assurance that the plan continues to be representative of the community. Methods and designs for its implementation are essential components of the total plan.

The Town of East Hartford last updated its Plan of Conservation and Development in 2003, in conformance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), Title B, Chapter 126, Section 8-23, which requires each municipality to review its plan every 10 years. Plans of Conservation and Development are commonly described as cookbooks, toolboxes and blueprints, all providing guidance and strategies for the municipal future. The plan-writing process is itself a critical part of the plan update. The process involves research and assessment tasks, reviews of past plans and their recommendations, analyses of current conditions, identification of strengths and weaknesses and a clear summary of the actions needed to most effectively address issues and build on assets.

Although plans of conservation and development set forth recommendations for a town's future, they are not in themselves laws or regulations. Recommendations are implemented through zoning laws and other land-use regulations, capital expenditures and ongoing planning. In addition, the plan enables the town to influence decisions by State agencies (such as ConnDOT, the state Department of Transportation) and the regional planners at CRCOG (Capitol Region Council of Governments), to strengthen the town's ability to attract state dollars for projects that support the plan.

In late 2012, the Town of East Hartford began the process of reviewing and updating its 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD" or "Plan"). In embarking on this update, the Town sought to build on the 2003 Plan, retaining its basic structure and preserving those goals and objectives that were still relevant. However, this 2013 Plan endeavors to reflect East Hartford's place within shifting regional and national trends that could have significant implications for planning efforts, focusing on key priorities such as population and housing diversity, commercial corridors, jobs, sustainability strategies and quality of life. To that end, the updated 2013 POCD includes an additional chapter to provide in-depth analysis of several specific study areas that present major development potential: the riverfront area, the Silver Lane commercial corridor and the Goodwin College/South Main Street area.

The year-long POCD update process was closely coordinated with Town staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission, and included two public workshops to gain consensus on Plan goals and objectives, review draft chapters and gather input on and test ideas for the new content of the Plan. In addition, upon completion of various draft elements of the Plan, pertinent documents and graphics were posted on the Town's website for citizen review and comment.

A number of relevant Town studies and plans were reviewed and incorporated into the updated Plan. These included 2010 amendments to the 2003 POCD, the Burnside Avenue Corridor Conceptual Development Plan and Implementation Strategy (1997), the Strategic Economic Development Plan (2000), the Park Avenue and Tolland Street Corridor Analysis Report and the Silver Lane Corridor Analysis Report (both in 2002), the Housing for Economic Growth Study (2010) and the Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development: 2010-2014. In addition, several publications of the CRCOG were reviewed: *Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions* (2002), *Trends Shaping Our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut's Capitol Region* (2003), *Freight Movement in the Hartford Metropolitan Area: A Regional Freight Market Overview* (2005), the Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2008), the Capitol Region Pre-Disaster Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2008), the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2009), the Buckland Area Transportation Study (2009), the Regional Transportation Plan (2011) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (2012).

### **Plan Goals and Objectives**

The overarching goals of this Plan are as follows:

- Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhoods.
- Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development,
- Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas.
- Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods.
- Revitalize and rejuvenate the Town Center.
- Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors.
- Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Town Center and with each other.
- Promote economic development to attract and retain business.
- Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business and employment opportunities.
- Support quality-of-life improvements.

The development of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development and its accompanying Generalized Land Use Plan serves to guide the Town's future development as an advisory or policy-setting document. Key to successful future development is the creation of Zoning and Subdivision regulations, design guidelines and implementation techniques which explicitly outline and effectively enforce the vision for the Town as set forth in the Plan.

## **1.2 East Hartford's History**

Occupying part of the lands once inhabited by the Podunk Indians, the Town saw its first permanent colonists in 1635, when Thomas Hooker and his followers came from Cambridge, Massachusetts to found Hartford. The east side of the Connecticut River was at that time part of Hartford, and was initially settled about 1640, with early settlers including William Goodwin, Thomas Burnham and William Pitkin. The first petition by residents to establish a separate town was rejected by the General Assembly in 1726. Several more petitions were submitted until 1783, when the Assembly ultimately gave its approval to the incorporation of East Hartford. The Town then received its Charter from the state on the land area taken from the City of Hartford.

During its early years as a Township, East Hartford's meetings were held in the basement of the First Congregational Church in the center of town at Main Street and Connecticut Boulevard. The Town would receive its first meeting hall through a bequest by Jonathan Wells in 1885, on a site slightly north of the town center, and the Town's first public library would be constructed in 1888-1889 by the Raymond family to the south.

By 1936, the Town was providing police and fire protection, had established a public school system and built its first high school and adopted its first Plan of Development in 1927, followed by its first building and zoning codes in 1929. The Town administration had outgrown Wells Hall and built a new Town Hall at its present location. A picture postcard around that time of the Town's center looking to the north of the new Town Hall depicted a Main Street lined with elms, grand old homes and several blocks of storefronts.

The town center at Main Street would be left behind with the 1929 arrival and subsequent growth of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. Tobacco fields in this area made way for housing, as the company grew to employ 40,000 during the war years. Construction of the I-84/Route 2 "mixmaster" interchange in the 1950s created a highway barrier, cutting East Hartford in two. The 1960s saw a proliferation of fairly homogenous subdivisions which today house many town residents.

The Town has continued to plan for its future throughout the past decades. Plans of Development were prepared in 1960, 1980, 1990 and 2003, while an interim plan titled *East Hartford at the Crossroads* was prepared in 1970. Population in East Hartford reached its peak in 1970 at 57,583, declining in each subsequent census period until 2010, when it recovered to a pre-1990 level. Reduced employment at Pratt & Whitney, out-migration to surrounding suburbs and rural areas and ongoing out-of-state migration all contributed to this population decrease.

Recent years have presented new directions for East Hartford. The waterfront, which at one time was overlooked, is now a driving force for the town's future; the Town Center and key

commercial corridors have undergone revitalization planning and been given new focus; and the reuse of Rentschler Field has provided the town with significant new development potential.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3 Regional and State Planning Context

The Capitol Region encompasses some 800 square miles surrounding the urban center of Hartford. The region is predominantly suburban in character, but nearly a third of the towns in the region can be characterized as rural. The Regional Context Map in Figure 1 shows East Hartford's location at the center of the regional transportation network, with I-84 and I-384 converging at the "mixmaster" interchange. Though largely suburban in nature, East Hartford, with a 2010 population of 51,252, is somewhat more urban – with a range of land uses, a fully developed infrastructure and connections to the regional mass transit system – than its neighboring communities of Glastonbury, Manchester and South Windsor. This can be attributed to East Hartford's proximity to the region's financial center and state capital at Hartford; accessibility from three bridge crossings at the Connecticut River; and the boom in growth of the manufacturing sector in the post-World War II years, led by Pratt & Whitney. A closer look at the town's development from a land-use perspective is provided in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The following section discusses East Hartford's role within the regional and state planning context.

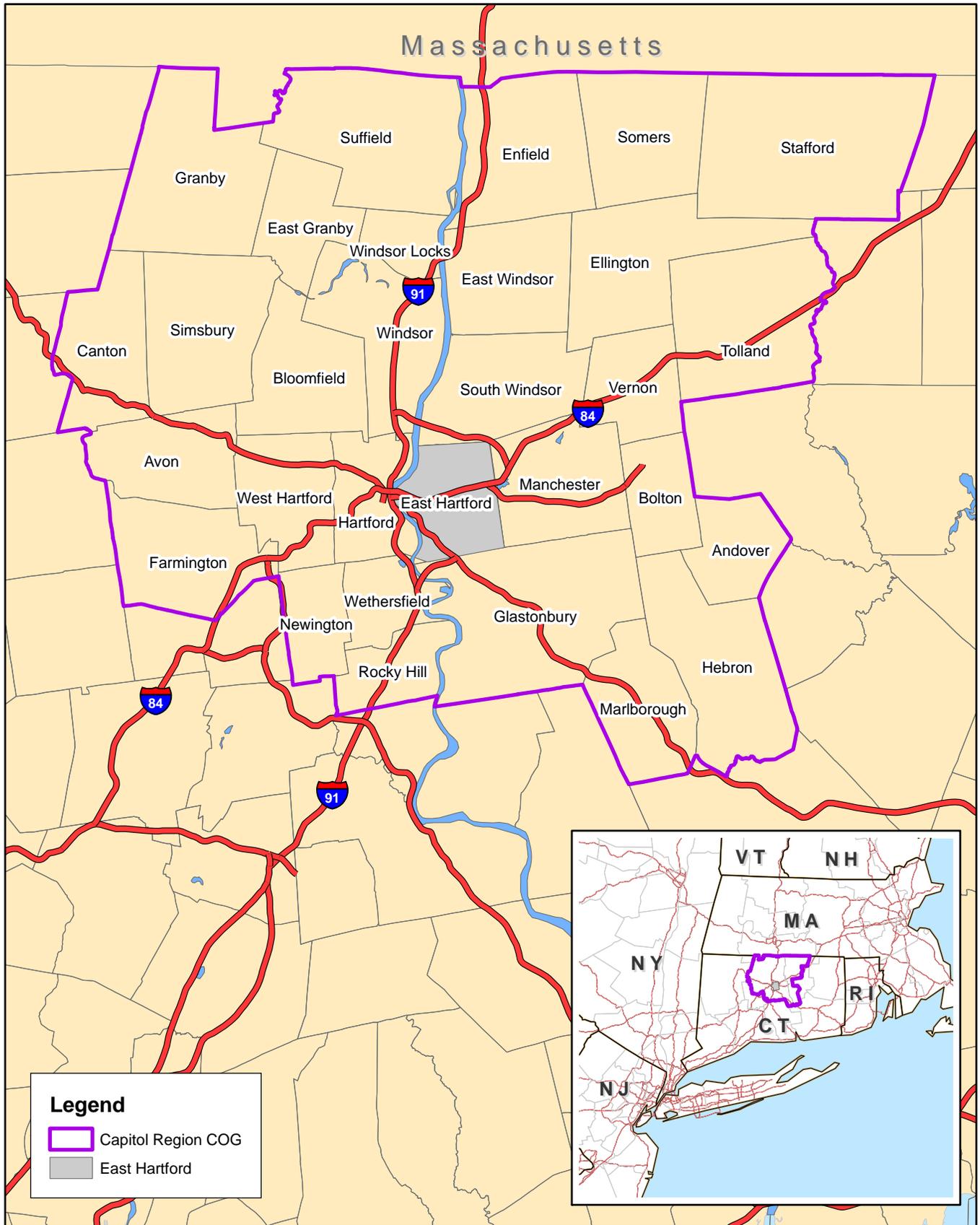
#### 1.3.1 Capitol Region Council of Governments

East Hartford is one of 30 member municipalities comprising the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) planning region (see Figure 2). The region's 2010 population was about 770,000, with some 125,000, or 16%, of its residents living in Hartford. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the CRCOG conducts long-term transportation planning for the Capitol Region. The CRCOG's most recent region-wide plan, *Achieving the Balance: A Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region* (2009), is an overall planning guide for the greater Hartford area, guided by six key themes:

- Focus new regional development in areas in which existing and planned infrastructure can support that development.
- Support efforts to strengthen and revitalize Hartford, the Capitol Region's central city, and also support the revitalization of older, urbanized areas throughout the region.
- Develop in a manner that respects and preserves community character and key natural resources.
- Implement open space and natural resources protection plans that acknowledge and support the multi-town nature of natural systems.
- Support the creation of new employment and housing opportunities, and transportation choices, to meet the diverse needs of the region's citizens.
- Encourage regional cooperation in the protection of natural resources, the revitalization of urban areas and economic development.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the 1990 and 2003 Plans of Conservation and Development and "About East Hartford," by Municipal Historian Raymond Johnson, available at <http://easthartfordct.gov>.





Although the CRCOG POCD does not contain recommendations specific to East Hartford, it does include a set of overall goals which may be applicable to the town:

## **CONSERVATION GOALS**

### ***Natural Resource Conservation***

- Protect air, water and soil quality in the region
- Grow and develop in harmony with natural resources
- Promote active natural resource stewardship

### ***Watersheds & Water Quality***

- Improve and maintain water quality
- Protect water supply and increase water conservation efforts
- Reduce nonpoint source pollution
- Continue combined sewer overflow and point-source pollution discharge reductions
- Use innovative wastewater treatment techniques for new developments

### ***Open Space & Farmland Preservation***

- Support protection of more open space in the region
- Encourage preservation of farmland in the region
- Encourage preservation of declassified water company land as open space
- Coordinate and prioritize open space preservation throughout the region
- Expand and protect open space along major rivers

### ***Food System***

- Preserve the Capitol Region's working lands
- Improve regional residents' access to food resources
- Improve the health and nutrition of the region's population
- Reduce environmental impacts of the food system

## **DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

### ***Land Use and Zoning***

- Guide growth to regional centers and areas of established infrastructure
- Increase redevelopment and infill development efforts
- Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to address local and regional land use concerns

### ***Public Water and Sewer Service***

- Ensure an adequate and high quality water supply
- Reduce environmental impacts of sewage discharge
- Use existing water and sewer infrastructure to guide future growth
- Balance water supply and ecosystem considerations

### ***Transportation***

- Provide a range of viable transportation options within the region
- Improve interregional and interstate transportation
- Coordinate land use, environmental and transportation efforts
- Anticipate and plan for future transportation needs

### ***Housing***

- Increase the range of choice in housing for people of all incomes and all ages, but especially for those who have the least choice in achieving their locational preference
- Enforce Federal and State fair housing laws
- Encourage and support the maintenance of viable residential neighborhoods
- Support preservation of the region's rental housing stock, and the expansion of housing opportunities for renters throughout the region
- Continue to improve the Capitol Region transportation system in order to better link housing, jobs and services, thus expanding individuals' housing choices

### ***Economic Development***

- Revitalize Hartford as the economic, residential, entertainment and cultural center of the Capitol Region
- Coordinate and promote regional land use, infrastructure and fiscal policies for economic development
- Increase the recognition of a regional identity
- Maintain a focus on workforce development
- Support and improve regional business development strategies and effort

The CRCOG has completed a number of studies and reports in recent years (specific issues and recommendations from these publications are discussed in the appropriate chapters of this Plan):

- Regional Housing Policy (1998)
- Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions (2002)
- Trends Shaping Our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut's Capitol Region (2003)
- Regional Strategy to Address Long-Term Homelessness (2004)
- Freight Management in the Hartford Metropolitan Area: A Regional Freight Market Overview (2005)
- Median Home Sales Prices for Single-Family Units (1978-2006)
- Transportation Monitoring and Management Report, Metropolitan Hartford Area: 2005 (2007)
- Capitol Region Pre-Disaster Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2008)
- Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2008)
- Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development (2009)
- Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Connecticut Capitol Region (2009)
- Bike/Pedestrian Count Project (2009 and 2012)
- Capitol Region Transportation Plan (2011)
- Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2012-2015 (2012)
- Capitol Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (Draft 2013)

### **1.3.2 State Planning Efforts**

As with the region, the Connecticut state government makes large-scale plans that have local significance. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) prepares a statewide plan every five years for adoption by the General Assembly. The current *Conservation and Development Policies Plan* (C&D Plan) covers 2013-2018. The plan is comprised of two components: the Plan text and the Locational Guide Map. Both components include policies that guide the planning and decision-making processes of state government according to a set of six Growth Management Principles:

1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure;
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options;
4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and traditional rural lands;

5. Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and
6. Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis.

Connecticut's municipalities and regional planning organizations (RPOs) are expected, per Connecticut General Statutes 8-23 and 8-35a, to not any inconsistencies with the state's Growth Management Principles when they update their respective plans of conservation and development. The significance of these principles and the Locational Guide Map for East Hartford rests in state funding. If the Town seeks state funding for local projects, OPM will review those projects for conformance to the state plan's principles and map. Generally speaking, a municipal capital project is more likely to be awarded state funds if East Hartford's plan and the state plan conform to each other. Thus, it is in the Town's best interest to make this Plan of Conservation and Development consistent with the state plan. Where that is not possible, East Hartford should work closely with the state on the next five-year plan to align the Locational Guide Map with the municipal plan.

### ***Locational Guide Map***

According to the OPM, the Locational Guide Map (LGM) "spatially interprets the Growth Management Principals contained in the Plan, with respect to each area's potential to fulfill and to balance the conservation and development priorities of the state." The LGM is intended to serve three purposes: 1) it reinforces the policies contained in the text of the State C&D Plan as the primary determinant of consistency for a proposed action; 2) it ensures that any LGM reference is a secondary consideration only after a proposed growth-related project has been deemed consistent with the policies of the State C&D Plan; and 3) it allows state agencies to operate with sufficient discretion and transparency.

The LGM divides the state into two key classifications to guide development: priority funding areas and conservation areas. These classifications are intended to help state agencies comply with the following administrative requirements of Connecticut General Statutes Section 16a-35d:

- (a) *No state agency, department or institution shall provide funding for a growth-related project unless such project is located in a priority funding area;*
- (b) *Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the head of a state department, agency or institution, with the approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, may provide funding for a growth-related project that is not located in a priority funding area upon determination that such project is consistent with the plan of conservation and development, adopted under section 8-23, of the municipality in which such project is located and that such project:*
  - (1) *Enhances other activities targeted by state agencies, departments and institutions to a municipality within the priority funding area;*

- (2) *Is located in a distressed municipality, targeted investment community or public investment community [as defined in the Connecticut General Statutes – East Hartford falls into each of these categories];*
- (3) *Supports existing neighborhoods or communities;*
- (4) *Promotes the use of mass transit;*
- (5) *Provides for compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse and promotes such development patterns and land reuse;*
- (6) *Creates an extreme inequity, hardship or disadvantage that clearly outweighs the benefits of locating the project in a priority funding area if such project were not funded;*
- (7) *Has no reasonable alternative for the project in a priority funding area in another location;*
- (8) *Must be located away from other developments due to its operation or physical characteristics;*  
*or*
- (9) *Is for the reuse or redevelopment of an existing site.*

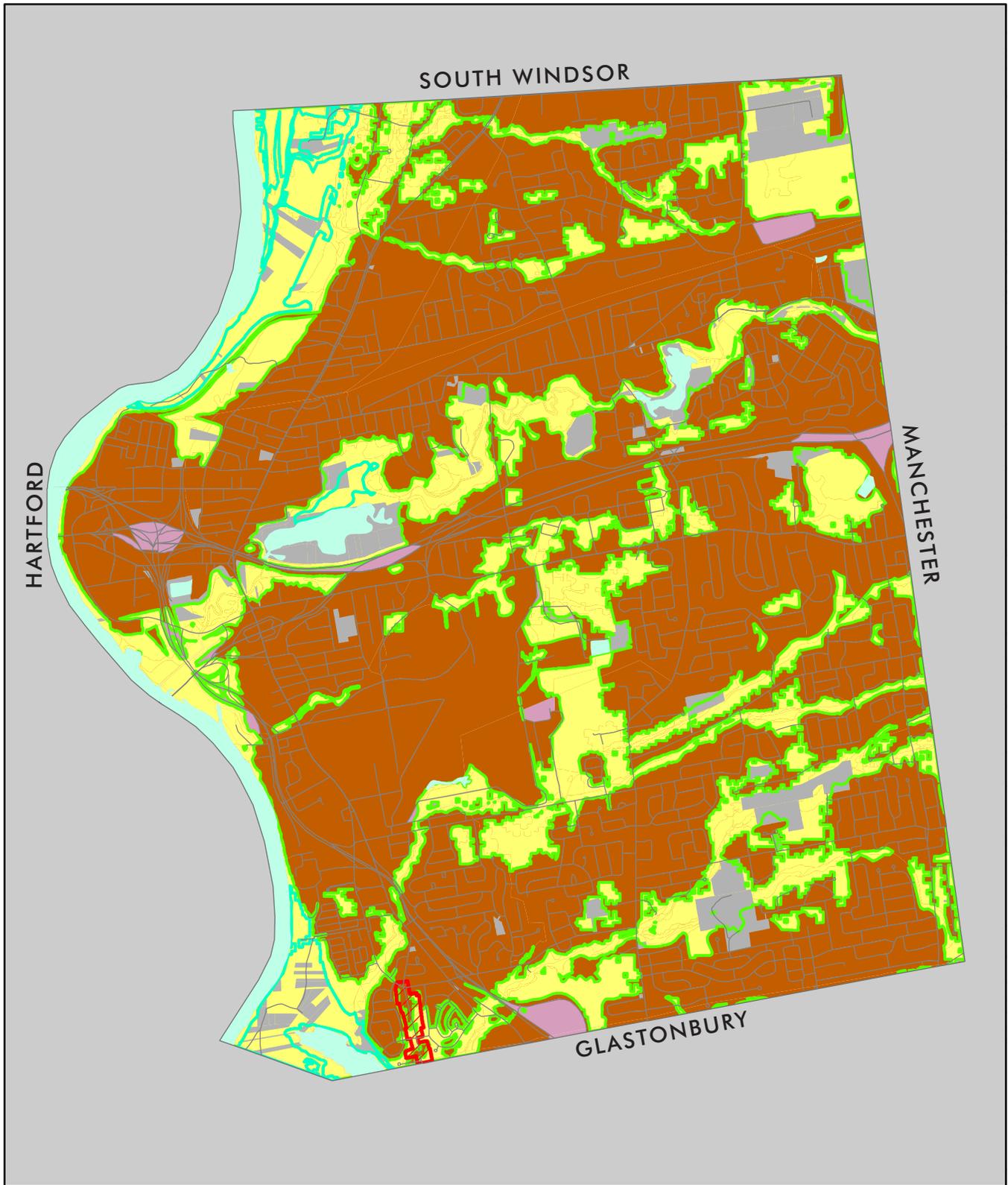
The LGM classifications for East Hartford are shown on Figure 3 and described below:

**Priority Funding Areas:**

1. Designation as an Urban Area or Urban Cluster in the 2010 Census
2. Boundaries that intersect a half-mile buffer surrounding existing/planned mass-transit stations
3. Existing or planned sewer service from an adopted Wastewater Facility Plan
4. Existing or planned water service from an adopted Public Drinking Water Supply Plan
5. Local bus service provided seven days a week

**Conservation Areas:**

1. Core forest areas greater than 250 acres based on the 2006 Land Cover Dataset
2. Existing or potential drinking water supply watersheds
3. Aquifer protection areas
4. Westland soils greater than 25 acres
5. Undeveloped prime, statewide important and locally important agricultural soils over 25 acres
6. Category 1, 2 or 3 hurricane inundation zones
7. 100-year flood zones
8. Critical habitats (depicts the classification and distribution of 25 rare and specialized wildlife habitats in the state)
9. Locally important conservation areas (based on data authorized/submitted by municipalities)



**Legend**

 Local Historic District

 Protected Lands

 Balanced Priority Funding Areas

**Conservation Areas**

 1-3 Conservation Factors

 4 Conservation Factors

**Priority Funding Areas**

 1-2 Criteria

 3-4 Criteria

**Balanced Priority Funding Areas:** These areas meet the criteria of both Priority Funding Areas and Conservation Areas. State agencies that propose certain actions in these areas must provide balanced consideration of all factors in determining the extent to which it is consistent with the policies of the State C&D Plan.

**Protected Lands:** Areas that have some sort of restriction on development, such as permanently protected open space or property in which the development rights have been acquired.

**Local Historic Districts:** Local Historic Districts are established and administered by the community itself to help ensure that the distinctive and significant characteristics of each district are protected, by having local preservation commissions review architectural changes for compatibility.

**Regional Centers:** The following municipalities are classified as Regional Centers: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, Enfield, Groton, Hartford, Killingly, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Torrington, Vernon, Waterbury, West Hartford, West Haven and Windham.

As shown in Figure 3, the vast majority of East Hartford is classified as a Priority Funding Area. This fact – as well as the town’s designation by the state as a distressed municipality, a targeted investment community and a public investment community – means that the OPM has granted significant flexibility in development in East Hartford.

## 2.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

The purpose of any plan of conservation and development is to meet the current and future needs of a population. Thus, it is imperative to have an understanding of the characteristics of the people who live and work in East Hartford.

### 2.1 Population

East Hartford has epitomized the urban/rural expansion trends of the past century. Between 1900 and 1930, the town expanded almost exponentially. After a lull during the Second World War, the population expanded even further each decade until it peaked in 1970 at 57,583 residents.

**Table 1: East Hartford Population, 1900-2010**

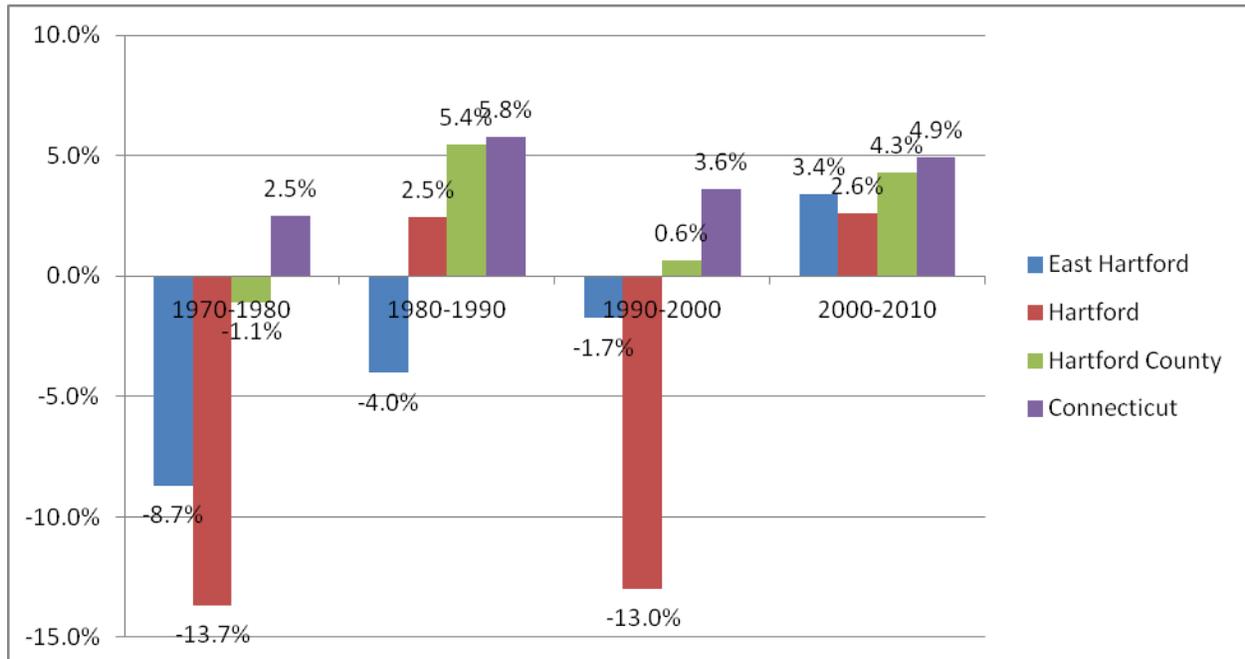
	Population	Change from Previous Decade	% Change from Previous Decade
1900	6,406		
1910	8,138	1,722	27.0%
1920	11,648	3,510	43.1%
1930	17,125	5,477	47.0%
1940	18,615	1,490	8.7%
1950	29,933	11,318	60.8%
1960	43,977	14,044	46.9%
1970	57,583	13,606	30.9%
1980	52,563	-5,020	-8.7%
1990	50,452	-2,111	-4.0%
2000	49,575	-877	-1.7%
2010	51,252	1,677	3.4%

Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

Between 1970 and 1980, East Hartford followed the regional and national trend of sharp population decreases in urban areas, losing 5,000 residents, or 8.7% of total population. The town's population continued to decrease over the next two decades, dropping to 49,575 in 2000, 14% less than the peak of 1970. However, in 2010, the population expanded by 3.4% to return to 51,252.

In Chart 1, below, the change in East Hartford's population is compared with the change in population of the City of Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut as a whole. It is interesting to note that the state's population has continued to grow since 1970, reflecting the capture from the shift from central cities to more suburban areas as well as overall regional population growth. Since 1980, Hartford County has experienced growth as well, and while East Hartford has lagged the larger areas in terms of repopulation, it has experienced a smoother stabilization compared with the City of Hartford.

**Chart 1: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut Percent Change in Population by Decade 1970-2010**



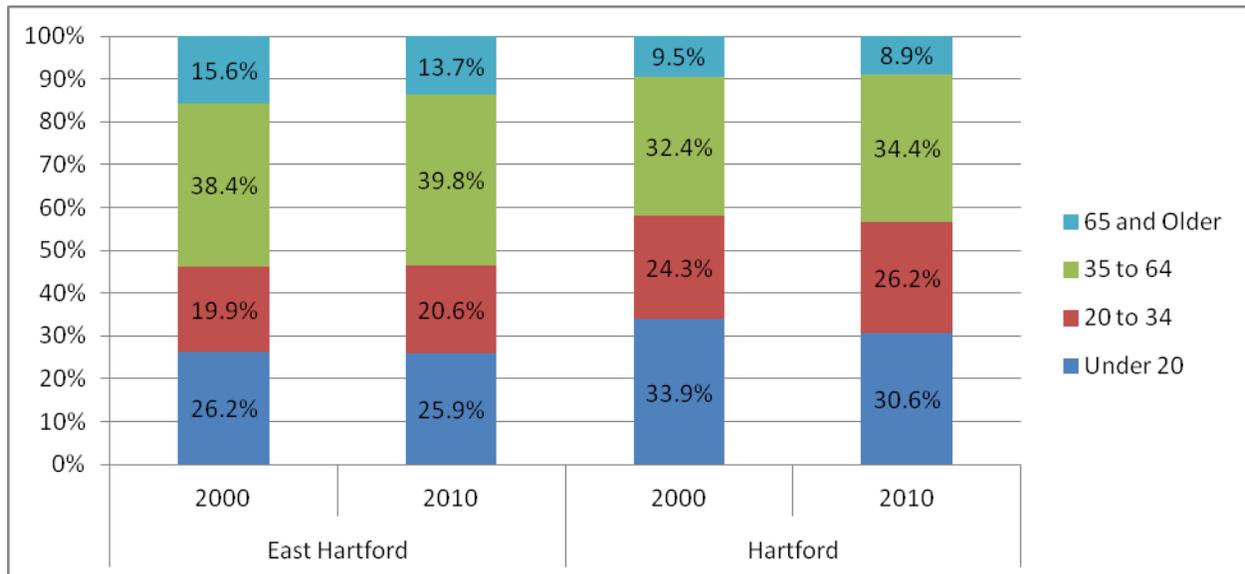
Source: US. Decennial Census 1970-2010

## 2.2 Age

The median age in East Hartford has increased in the past decade (like the rest of the region), from 37.4 to 37.8. Chart 2 compares the age distribution of East Hartford residents in 2000 and 2010 with that of Hartford in those same years. In both instances, the share of residents in the young adults (20 to 34) and prime working ages (35 to 64) have increased; in the case of East Hartford from 19.9% to 20.6% and 38.4% to 39.8%, respectively.

It is interesting to note that the share of children (those under the age of 20) and the elderly (those 65 and older) both decreased, from 26.2% to 25.9% and 15.6% to 13.7%, respectively, of total population. However, while children as a percentage of overall population declined, their actual number increased from 12,972 in 2000 to 13,292 in 2010, growth of 2.5%. Meanwhile, the number of persons 65 and older has decreased by 8.9%, from 7,733 to 7,045.

**Chart 2: East Hartford and Hartford: Age Distribution 2000 and 2010**



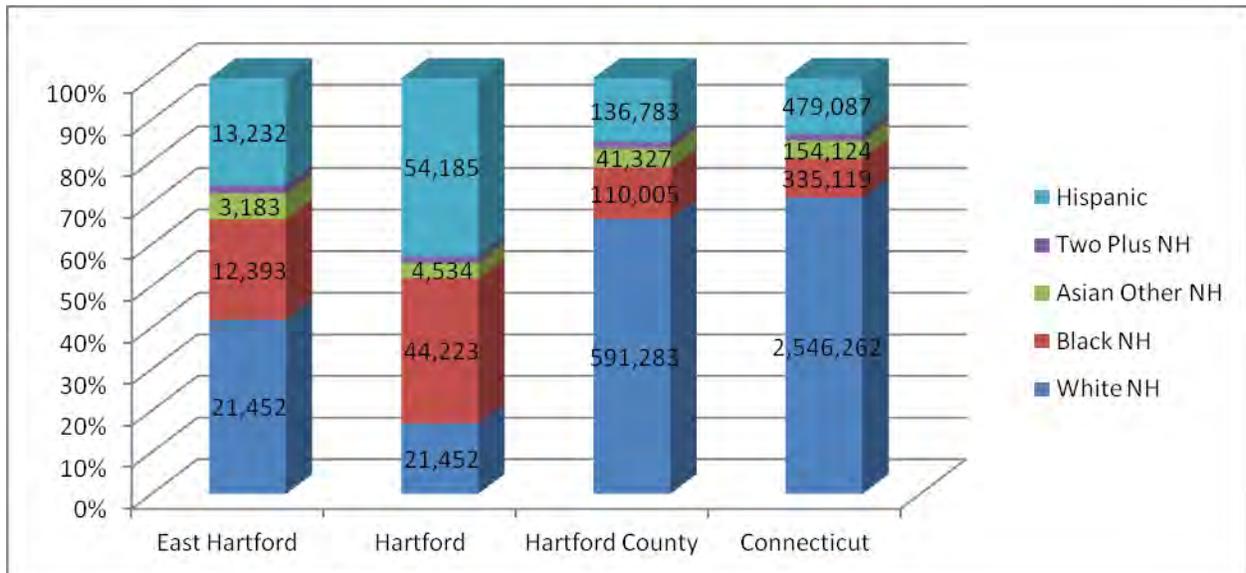
Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

### 2.3 Mutually Exclusive Race/Ethnicity

As of 2010, East Hartford is more diverse (58.1% minority) than Hartford County (33.9%) or Connecticut overall (28.8%), but less diverse than the City of Hartford (83%). The largest mutually exclusive racial/ethnic group remains non-Hispanic single-race whites, at 41.9% of the population, followed by Hispanics (of any race) at 25.8%, single-race black non-Hispanics at 24.2%, single-race Asian/other non-Hispanics at 6.2%, and non-Hispanics of two or more races at 1.9%.

Between 2000 and 2010, both single-race non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanics of two or more races decreased in number, while the numbers of Hispanics (of any race), single-race black non-Hispanics, single-race Asian/other non-Hispanics all increased (see Chart 3, below).

**Chart 3: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut: Mutually Exclusive Racial/Ethnic Distribution 2010**



Source: US. Decennial Census 2010

## 2.4 Household Size

After declining between 1990 and 2000, the average household size in East Hartford increased to 2.5 persons per household in 2010. This is lower than each of the surrounding areas (except Glastonbury) including both the county and state as a whole, as seen in Table 2.

The East Hartford increase in household size is a factor in both the 3.4% increase in total population and in the 0.1% decrease in the total number of households.

## 2.5 Household Income

Of the surrounding municipalities, East Hartford has the second-lowest median household income in 2010, at \$48,887. Hartford’s median household income is lower at \$28,069, while Manchester, South Windsor and Glastonbury, as expected in suburbs of that nature, have greater medians at \$61,731, \$88,768 and \$103,532, respectively.

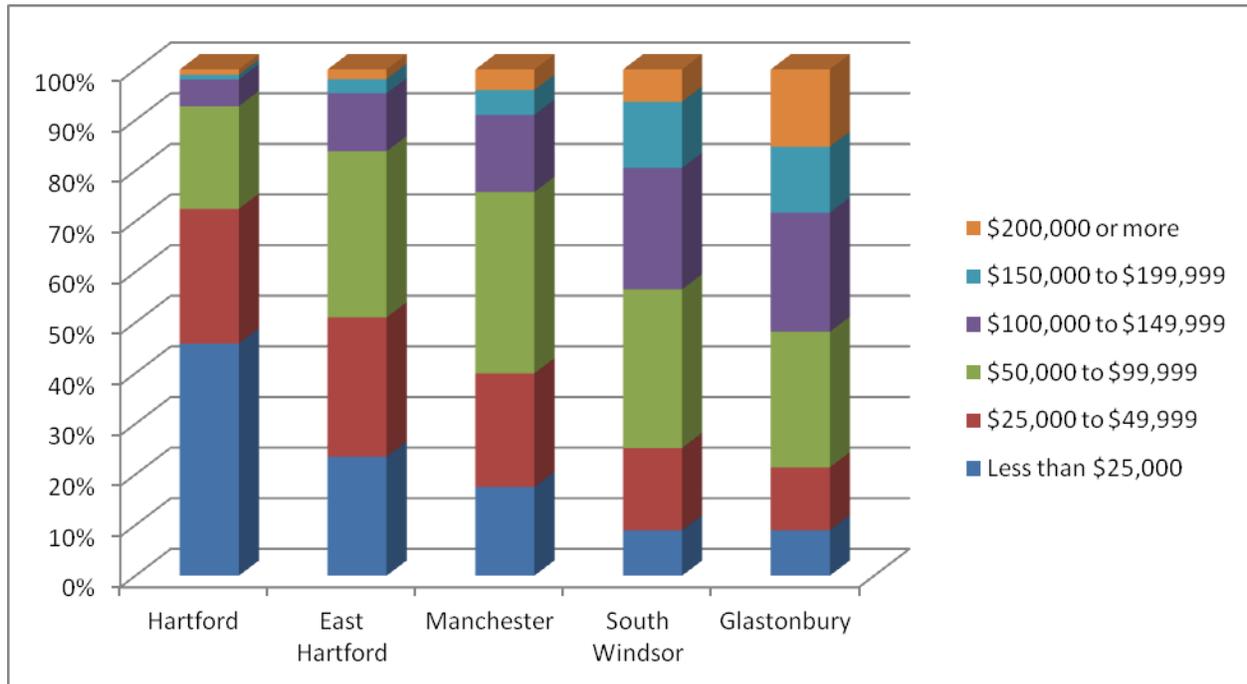
Chart 4, below, shows income distribution in 2010 for each of the five municipalities. The largest share of East Hartford households (32.8%) has incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999. This is the largest income cohort for each of the municipalities except the City of Hartford. More than 50% of East Hartford households have incomes in the two cohorts less than \$50,000, compared with 40% of Manchester, 25% of South Windsor and only 20% of Glastonbury.

**Table 2: East Hartford and Environs: Household Size Characteristics, 1990-2010**

	1990			2000			2010		
	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size
East Hartford	49,439	20,343	2.43	48,865	20,206	2.42	50,512	20,195	2.50
Glastonbury	27,687	10,553	2.62	31,546	12,257	2.57	34,070	13,135	2.59
Hartford	131,419	51,464	2.55	116,223	44,986	2.58	115,824	45,124	2.57
Manchester	50,701	20,745	2.44	53,702	23,197	2.32	57,381	24,689	2.32
South Windsor	21,963	7,850	2.80	24,211	8,905	2.72	25,597	9,918	2.58
Hartford County	827,887	324,691	2.55	857,183	335,098	2.56	894,014	350,854	2.55
Connecticut	3,185,946	1,230,479	2.59	3,297,626	1,301,670	2.53	3,455,945	1,371,087	2.52

Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

**Chart 4: East Hartford and Surrounding Municipalities: Income Distribution 2010**



Source: American Community Survey 2010 3-Year, Economic Profile

## 2.6 Labor Force Characteristics

The labor force participation rate (those persons 16 or older who are currently employed or looking for a job) had, by 2010, almost returned to 1990 levels of 69.8%, after dropping to 64.1% in 2000.

**Table 3: East Hartford Labor Force Characteristics, 1990-2010**

	1990	2000	2010
Population 16 and Older	41,682	38,811	40,271
Persons in Labor Force	29,110	24,886	28,089
Civilian Labor Force	29,052	24,874	28,008
Employed	27,515	23,601	24,584
Unemployed	1,537	1,273	3,424
Persons not in Labor Force	12,572	13,925	12,182
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	5.1%	12.2%
Labor Force Participation Rate	69.8%	64.1%	69.7%

Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

Unemployment however, has more than doubled, reaching 3,424 persons (12.2%) at the time of the 2010 Census. But, according to the Connecticut Department of Labor, the annual average unemployment rate in East Hartford was better at 10.6% in 2012.

## 2.7 Commutation

Where East Hartford residents work and East Hartford workers live are of key import to the Plan, especially insofar as potential housing development and infrastructure are concerned. The following images show thermals of jobs per square mile in 2002 and 2010, according to the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Database. The scales of the maps are different; however what is of note is the dispersal of jobs in 2010 that did not exist in the much more concentrated pattern of 2002. Of particular importance is the number of new jobs in western East Hartford along the river as well as the number of new jobs near Rentschler Field.

As shown in Table 4, the most common places of work have not changed significantly between 2002 and 2010. The most common is across the river in Hartford (1 in 5 residents), followed by East Hartford and West Hartford. However, it is notable that the share of employed residents that both live and work in East Hartford has declined by four percentage points, or more than 1,000 workers between 2002 and 2010.

East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2002

East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2010

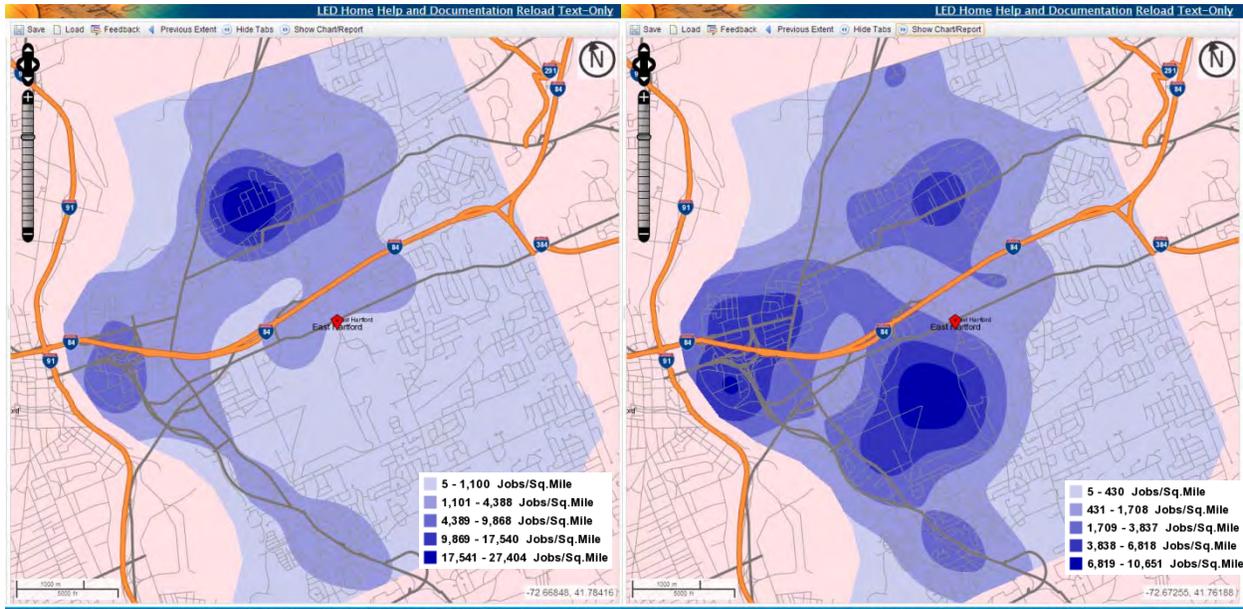


Table 4: East Hartford Resident Most Common Places of Work: 2002, 2006, 2010

	2002		2006		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Hartford city, CT	5,168	20.6%	5,167	20.1%	4,998	20.8%
East Hartford CDP, CT	4,263	17.0%	3,706	14.4%	3,139	13.0%
West Hartford CDP, CT	1,012	4.0%	1,034	4.0%	915	3.8%
Manchester CDP, CT	607	2.4%	589	2.3%	665	2.8%
Glastonbury Center CDP, CT	599	2.4%	622	2.4%	605	2.5%
Newington CDP, CT	515	2.0%	577	2.2%	499	2.1%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

## 2.8 Population Projections

The previous Plan of Conservation and Development used the CONNDOT projections from 2001. These projections, as do those from 2011, forecasted very little population growth in East Hartford (0.2% by 2030 vs. 0.4% by 2040) as shown in the table below. However, it should be noted that the enumerated 2010 population (51,252) is much higher than the 2001 forecast of 49,660.

**Table 5: East Hartford Population Projections\*\***

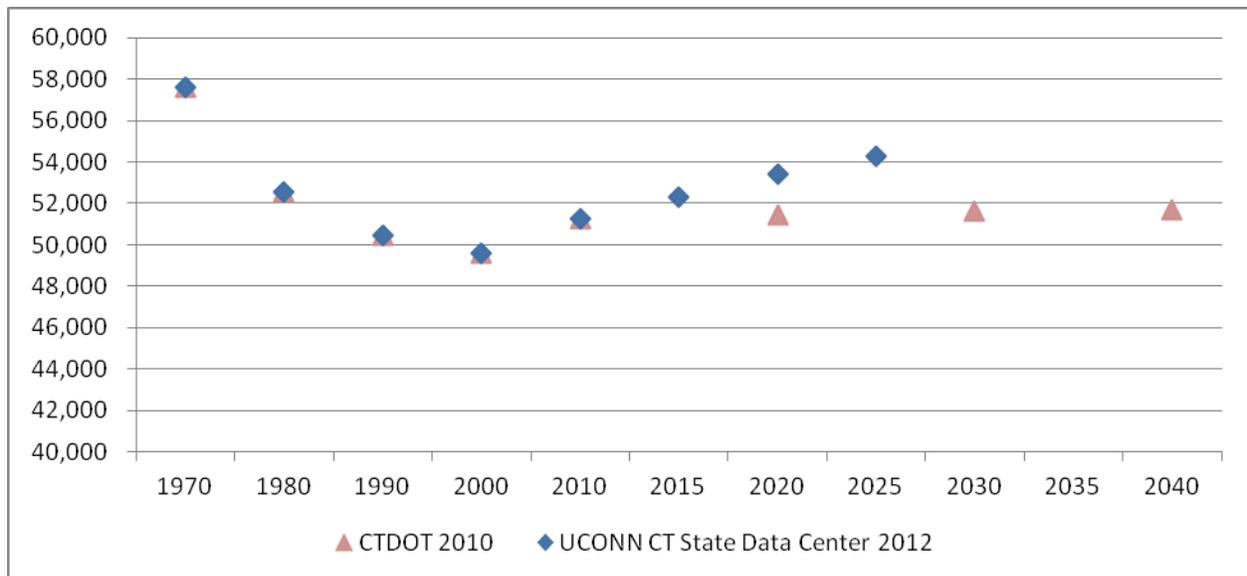
	CONN DOT 2001	CONN DOT 2010	UConn CT State Data Center 2012
Actual 2000	49,575		49,575
2010	49,660	51,252	51,252
2015			52,303
2020	49,760	51,471	53,384
2025			54,299
2030	49,810	51,608	
2035			
2040		51,704	

Sources: CONN DOT 2001, CONN DOT 2011, UCONN State Data Center 2012

\*\*It should be noted that different organizations prepare projections for different year cohorts. Years for which projections are not available are greyed out.

The Connecticut Data Center projections on the other hand, show much more robust growth in East Hartford – likely modeled on the increase in population between 2000 and 2010 – with the town’s population predicted to regain mid-1970s levels (54,299) by 2025.

**Chart 5: East Hartford Population Projections**



Source: CONN DOT and UCONN CT State Data Center

The reality will likely fall between the two; however, given that the total number of people is within a range of 3,000 and that neither set of projections shows population surpassing East Hartford’s peak, the population implications for the term of this Plan of Conservation and development are not significant.

## **3.0 LAND USE AND ZONING**

### **3.1 Introduction**

East Hartford is predominantly a residential community consisting of a variety of subdivisions containing either exclusively single-family homes and/or two-family homes. Several pockets of apartment complexes and publicly assisted housing developments are located in East Hartford, which add density and housing choice within an overall suburban setting.

“Old East Hartford” encompasses the area around Main Street, the Central Business District, and the industrial corridors along the rail lines on Park and Tolland Avenues, including the northeast spur toward Burnham Street. Glimpses of “Rural East Hartford” include North Main Street and King Street as well as Hills Street, headed toward Manchester. “Suburban East Hartford” includes the post-war bungalows and single-family homes located to the southeast of the Central Business District. This area is interspersed with neighborhood schools and playgrounds; shopping plazas along Silver Lane, south end of Main Street, north end of Ellington Road, and east end of Burnside Avenue; as well as Prestige Industrial Park.

Many of the land use patterns that were described in the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development endure in the fabric of the town today. The residential neighborhoods that comprise the majority of the town’s land area have remained intact, with some infill housing occurring in vacant or underutilized areas. The land use changes that have occurred in East Hartford over the past 10 years have primarily been redevelopment projects along the major transportation corridors (i.e. Silver Lane and Main Street). The most significant of these is the redevelopment of Rentschler Field, which has begun to transform the approximately 1,000-acre former United Technologies Corporation (UTC) airfield into a significant regional commercial and entertainment destination. Today, the site is occupied by the headquarters of UTC’s Pratt & Whitney and United Technologies Research Center, as well as the 40,000-seat University of Connecticut Rentschler Field Stadium, and the 186,000-square-foot Cabela’s outdoor recreation retailer. The completion of the planned redevelopment of the entire site has the significant economic development potential, but should be guided in a way that ensures maximum benefit to residents and businesses in East Hartford.

Another key change in land use since the 2003 Plan is the growth of Goodwin College along the southern riverfront of the town. Founded in 1999 out of the former Data Institute in East Hartford, Goodwin College has grown to a total enrollment of more than 3,200 students. In late 2008, the college opened its present campus along Riverside Drive and has pursued an extensive program of new construction and redevelopment that has changed the pattern of development throughout the south Main Street area. The college’s expansion creates substantial possibilities for positive economic spillover effects, but it must be managed to balance the Town’s requirement for tax ratables and the need to maintain and enhance public riverfront access. See Chapter 11 for further discussion on Rentschler Field and Goodwin College.

### 3.2 Land Use Patterns

The land use pattern of East Hartford generally reflects the suburban residential character of the community. Table 6, below, and Figure 4 on the following page depict the Town’s land use distribution by land use category.

**Table 6: Existing Land Use**

<u>Land Use*</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>4,375</b>	<b>37.6%</b>
Single-Family	3,580	30.8%
2-3 Family	366	3.1%
4+ Family	324	2.8%
Mobile Home	105	0.9%
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Office/Medical</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>Open Space/Agriculture/Cemetery</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
<b>Transportation**/Utility</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>14.4%</b>
<b>Vacant/Unclassified</b>	<b>1,399</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,626</b>	<b>100%</b>

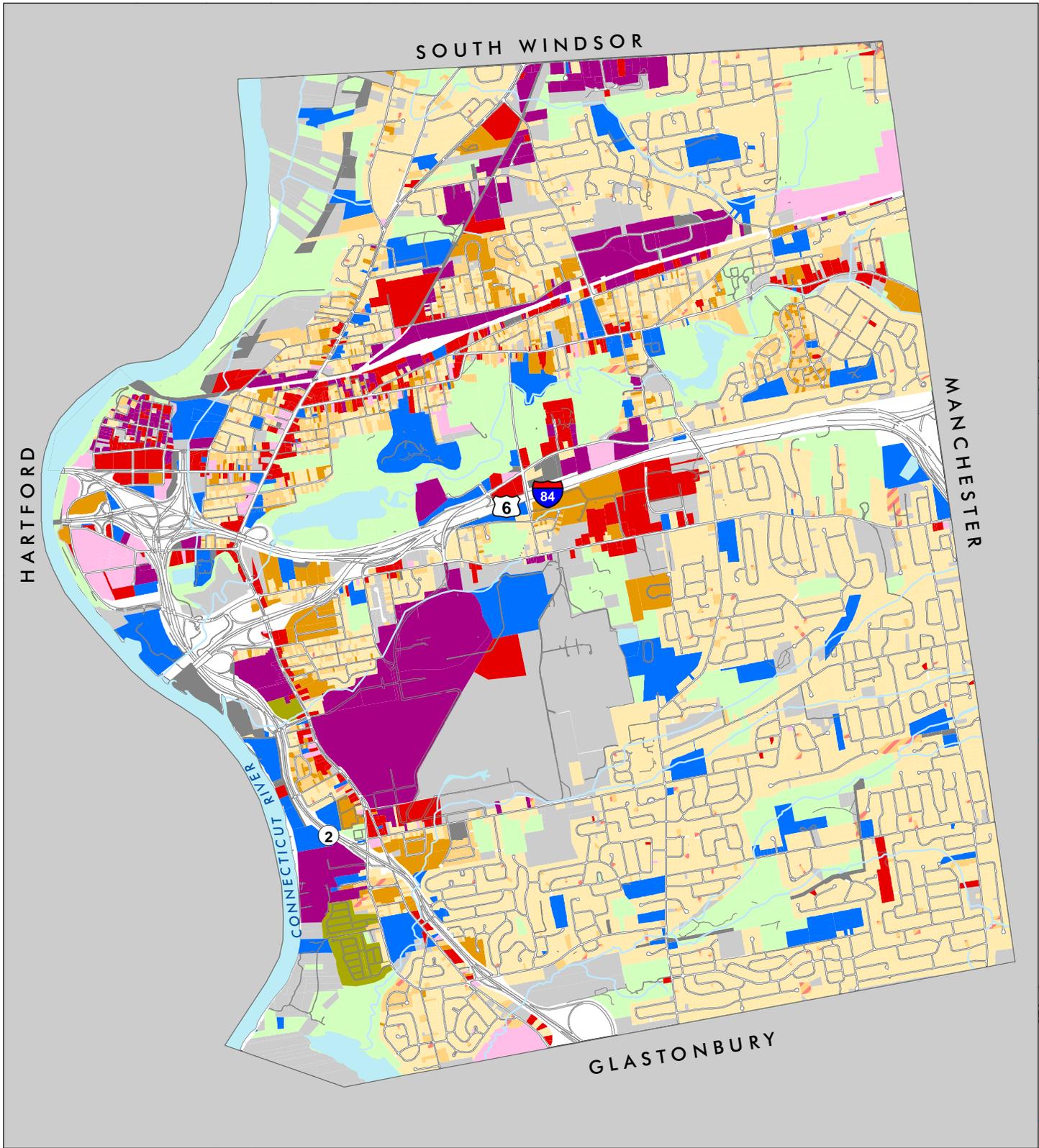
\*Land uses include land below water.

\*\*Estimated area

Source: Metropolitan District Commission, 2009, updated by BFJ Planning, 2013

As shown, single-family homes comprise the greatest percentage of the town’s land use. In fact, of the town’s total land area of almost 12,000 acres (18.8 square miles), about 30% is developed as detached single-family homes, with an additional 7% developed in other residential uses, bringing the total land in East Hartford dedicated to residential use to nearly 38%.

East Hartford’s next-largest land-use category is open space, which represents roughly 15% of land area, and is comprised of dedicated open space, cemeteries and agriculture. This land use has increased slightly since the 2003 POCD was developed, as increases in dedicated open space have offset a decline in agricultural uses.



**Legend**

- |               |             |                |                                 |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Single Family | Mobile Home | Office/Medical | Open Space/Agriculture/Cemetery |
| 2-3 Family    | Mixed-use   | Industrial     | Vacant/No Property Detail       |
| 4+ Family     | Commercial  | Institutional  | Transportation/ROW/Utility      |

Vacant land is another significant land use for the town; however, because East Hartford is largely built out, this use represents a substantially smaller portion of total land area than may be found in other suburban communities in the region. With only 12% of total land area remaining vacant, very little development can be expected to occur on raw, undeveloped land. Furthermore, this acreage figure does not take into consideration the physical development constraints found on remaining vacant properties, such as wetlands, floodplains or steep slopes. If these potential constraints are accounted for in the calculation of vacant land, it is estimated that about one-half of the vacant land would be developable, accounting for just 6% of the town's total land area.

As observed in prior plans, the declining amount of vacant land in the Town indicates that future growth will likely involve either infill development projects that close the gaps in the existing land use pattern, or redevelopment projects on key parcels. By far the largest infill development project is Rentschler Field, which is discussed further in Chapter 12. Continued redevelopment projects may be expected along Main Street (especially in the Goodwin College area), Silver Lane, Burnside Avenue, Park Avenue and Tolland Street.

In assessing current land use, three other important factors are evident. The first is the comparatively small proportion of East Hartford's land area that is devoted to commercial or office/medical. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated in the town's central business district (Main Street between I-84 and the railroad), as well as along the rest of Main Street, Burnside Avenue, Silver Lane between Rentschler Field and I-84 and Founders' Plaza. Office uses are scattered throughout the central business district, the riverfront area south of I-84 and along areas bordering Manchester and Glastonbury.

The major retail shopping in the Greater Hartford region now tends to be anchored in the west by West Farms Mall in West Hartford and to the east by Buckland Commons in Manchester. The large number of stores at Buckland Commons means that East Hartford's residents are traveling elsewhere for their shopping and dining needs, and that the town is therefore losing significant economic activity.

A second factor is the lack of mixed uses (buildings combining both residential and commercial/office uses) in the town. Less than 1% of East Hartford's total area is comprised of mixed uses, and they are largely isolated, not found along the town's principal corridors. In general, a mix of residential, retail, office and other commercial uses is recommended in commercial nodes to create more activity and strengthen the viability of local businesses.

Finally, institutional (public or semi-public) uses have increased as a percentage of East Hartford's land area, and now surpass industrial land area. Much of this growth is due to the expansion of Goodwin College's riverfront campus since the completion of the 2003 POCD. The college's growth has clear economic benefits for the town and also has positive impacts on the overall image of East Hartford, but its continued growth must be balanced against the fiscal impacts resulting from increases in non-taxable uses.

### 3.3 Zoning

Zoning powers are the primary control for development and redevelopment of land. Table 7 summarizes the basic zoning requirements for the Town, while Figure 5 depicts the various zoning districts found in East Hartford.

**Table 7: Existing Zoning**

Zone	Principal Permitted Use	Minimum Lot Size	Yard Setbacks			Bldg. Coverage	Min. Height
			Front	Side (combined)	Rear		
R-1	1-family	30,000 sf	50 ft	30 ft	50 ft	15%	35 ft
R-2	1-family	15,000	40 ft	25 ft	40 ft	25%	35 ft
R-3	1-family	10,000	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-4	1-, 2- and 3-family	7,600 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-5	1, 2- and 3-family, multifamily by special permit	7,600 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-6	1-family, mobile home by special permit	10,000 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
B-1A	Retail, restaurants, offices, services, senior housing by special permit	20,000 sf	40 ft	25 ft/each side	40 ft	25%	50 ft
B-1	Retail; restaurants; offices; 1, 2- and 3-family; services; small-scale manufacturing; multifamily by special permit	5,000 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft
B-2	Retail; restaurants; offices; manufacturing; marinas; 1-, 2- and 3-family; multifamily by special permit	7,500 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft
B-3	Retail, restaurants, offices, manufacturing, marinas	10,000 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	50 ft
B-4	Retail, restaurants, offices, services, marinas, mixed-use development by special permit	10,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	20 ft	75%	210 ft
B-5	Retail, restaurants, offices, services, commercial recreation, work/live units by special permit	10,000 sf	None, consistent with existing buildings	25 ft	20 ft	75%	40 ft
I-1	Restaurants, office/research by special permit	1 acre	50 ft	25 ft	50 ft	50%	50 ft
I-2	Office/research, manufacturing, restaurants, storage	20,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	75%	50 ft
I-3	All uses except residential, schools, churches or hospitals. Adult uses permitted with restrictions	40,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft

Source: Town of East Hartford



In addition to the above, there are four floating zones intended to promote development goals:

- The **Comprehensive Downtown Rehabilitation (CDR) Zone** is designed to provide greater flexibility for commercial and residential uses for lots within the existing B-5 zone with frontage on Main Street, Connecticut Boulevard and Burnside Avenue. The zone requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, but other area, bulk and parking standards may be set by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The CDR zone also includes additional landscaping and architectural standards. To date, this zone has been mapped on two sites along northern Main Street.
- The **Design Development District I (DDD-1) Zone** is intended to provide flexibility for large-scale development sites within the underlying I-3, I-2, B-4 or B-1A districts. The zone requires a minimum lot size of 20 acres. Development standards are subject to a site Master Plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and shall meet open space and buffer requirements. This zone has been mapped on Rentschler Field and several parcels along the southern riverfront area, corresponding to Goodwin College.
- The **Design Development District II (DDD-2) Zone** is meant to facilitate clustered housing aimed at residents aged 55 and older, within any district allowing residential uses. The zone has a minimum lot size of 10 acres, and parcels designated as DDD-2 must have frontage on a State highway or a Town-designated arterial or collector road. Development standards are subject to a site Master Plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and shall meet density, bedroom mix, open space, building location, landscaping and parking standards. This zone has been mapped on two parcels in north-central portion of the town.
- The **Incentive Development Zone** is designed to encourage reinvestment in selected commercial areas that are primarily built-out. The zone may be applied to any area identified in the 2003 POCD as a commercial node, or a designated redevelopment area or plan. The zone has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, and parcels designated for the Incentive Development Zone must have frontage on a State highway or a Town-designated arterial or collector road. Permitted uses are those in the B-1 zone, but the Planning and Zoning Commission may modify area, bulk and parking standards. This zone has been mapped in two locations, on Burnside Avenue and Silver Lane.

### 3.4 Issues and Opportunities

Based on the above discussion of existing land use and zoning regulations, this section recommends several items to be addressed in the Future Land Use Plan or through further study.

#### 3.4.1 Strengthen Main Street as the primary commercial corridor

Recent development along southern Main Street has seen an increase in office and educational uses related to Goodwin College. It is recommended that the Town consider limiting the front 50% of floor area on the ground floor of buildings located within the B-5 zone along Main Street, and the B-2 zone along Main Street between Willow Street and Brewer Street to restaurants, retail and personal-service uses<sup>2</sup>. Any other use allowed in these zones that are proposed for the front 50% of the ground-floor space of buildings fronting on Main Street would be a special permit use. The Town may consider adding this restriction to other portions of Main Street, in particular the central business district. A limit on ground-floor uses is not recommended for the entire length of Main Street, as there is not likely demand for retail/service, restaurant and entertainment uses along the whole corridor. In some locations, office, educational, institutional and residential uses may be appropriate.

#### 3.4.2 Promote mixed uses to enhance economic vitality

As discussed above, East Hartford has very little land area devoted to mixed uses. A robust mix of commercial, office and residential uses can increase street activity and strengthen local businesses by creating a market for goods and services, while combining these uses in buildings or on parcels can improve land-use efficiency through shared parking and other mutually beneficial factors. Although residential uses are allowed in most of the business zones, it does not appear that the special permit provisions governing their inclusion in the business zones are promoting a true mix of uses. For example, the B-5 zone (corresponding to East Hartford's central business district) only permits residential uses in work/studio dwellings, while the per-unit lot area, yard and coverage provisions for multifamily uses in the B-1 and B-2 zones effectively limit multifamily to single-use parcels, rather than in combination with other uses (i.e., apartments above stores). The special permit requirements for residential uses in business zones should be thoroughly reviewed to facilitate a better mix of uses, especially in the central business district and along key commercial corridors.

#### 3.4.3 Reassess the I-3 zone

East Hartford's I-3 district has been designed to be the heavy manufacturing zone of the town. It allows all uses except for residential uses, schools, houses of worship or hospitals, and places additional restrictions on certain industrial activities, largely related to the potential creation of

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<sup>2</sup> This is not currently a defined use in the Town's regulations, but generally includes uses such as hair/mail salons, dry cleaners, pet grooming establishments, etc. The Town may consider creating a definition to encompass such desired uses.

nuisances or to hazardous materials concerns. This zone is also the only location in town where adult-oriented uses are allowed. Yet the zone also allows accessory on-site day-care facilities and restaurants (including accessory outdoor dining), which would appear to be in potential conflict with many of the permitted heavy-duty industrial uses. Given that both day-care facilities and restaurants are allowed in various other zones in East Hartford – and that restaurants, in particular, are more desired in business zones – it is recommended to eliminate these uses as special permit uses in the I-3 zone. To provide greater clarity, the Town may also consider revising the I-3 regulations to indicate what uses are permitted, rather than what uses are not.

#### **3.4.4 Review restaurant and hotel provisions to ensure attractive, viable uses**

Throughout the Town's zoning regulations, restaurants and hotels are treated differently if they sell alcoholic beverages or not. In some cases, the differences are simply related to the requirement of a liquor license or the adequate separation of the portions of the restaurant serving alcohol. However, in other cases, the differences are more substantive. For example, in the B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4 zones, hotels and motels are allowed by special permit, but if they serve alcoholic beverages, they are subject to an additional minimum room requirement. These requirements may have been adopted to address nuisance issues and the potential proliferation of bars. However, the restrictions may be outdated and should be reviewed to ensure that they are not acting to deter the establishment of local businesses.

Similarly, it may be time to review the regulations on outdoor dining, which were adopted in 2003, to determine whether distinctions between temporary and permanent seasonal outdoor dining uses, and between restaurants service alcoholic beverages, are still necessary. Streamlining the outdoor dining regulations could make it easier for more restaurants to explore providing that amenity, with resultant benefits to street-level vitality and economic activity, without sacrificing proper controls.

#### **3.4.5 Review parking regulations to achieve stronger site designs**

In general, most of East Hartford's parking regulations appear to be functioning well. However, the Town should consider reviewing the requirements for certain uses, to ensure that parking needs are adequately addressed but that excessive surface parking areas are not required. Adjusting parking ratios to conform to modern standards can result in greater flexibility in building placement, the potential for more landscaping and reduction in impervious surfaces. To further this goal, the Town should conduct a thorough review of its parking ratios to assure that they are in keeping with current best practices and are taking advantage of opportunities for shared parking and promotion of non-vehicular transportation.

Two ratios that stand out in particular are multifamily and manufacturing uses. Multifamily uses currently require 2 spaces per unit, or 2.5 spaces per unit for three- or four-bedroom units, plus an additional 20% of the total spaces for visitor parking. Current best practices do not require parking for visitors, and generally suggest minimum required parking spaces as follows:

- Studio: 1 space
- One-bedroom: 1.25 spaces
- Two-bedroom: 1.75 spaces
- Three-bedroom or more: 2 spaces

In addition, the Town's current parking requirement for manufacturing uses is 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area, excluding area used for storage. Based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards, a requirement of approximately 1 space per 800 square feet of floor area would be more appropriate to modern standards.

The Town may also consider addressing shared parking, land-banking and in-lieu fees within the parking regulations found in Section 209 of the zoning code. Shared parking (a reduction in the total number of required parking spaces based on a provision of complementary uses with different peak parking demands) is currently addressed in the regulations for several of the individual zones, but placing it in the overall parking regulations would highlight its potential use to development applicants. Land-banking allows applicants to demonstrate that they have sufficient area to provide all their desired parking, but allows the portion of that area devoted to spaces in excess of the minimum requirements to be left unpaved, unless and until it is subsequently determined to be needed based on actual demand. This practice has been shown to reduce excessive paved parking areas, allowing for more landscaping and reduction of impervious surfaces, while still provided all required parking spaces. Finally, fees in-lieu of parking allow applicants who cannot provide required parking on-site due to the particular characteristics of the property to pay a specified fee into a fund dedicated by the Town solely for public parking needs, including the acquisition of land.

#### **3.4.6 Update zoning regulations to facilitate desired development**

The Town zoning regulations contain a number of inconsistencies, as some terms are undefined and some language may be outdated or confusing. The code should be updated, clarified and streamlined to ensure that it can be administered effectively and interpreted by the public and applicants appearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission. In addition, the zoning map should be reviewed to determine whether all the zoning districts are necessary. For example, the I-1 zone is not currently mapped in East Hartford, and it is presumed that the uses it is designed to promote (office and research laboratories) could be accommodated in the I-2 zone. Other zones may be considered for consolidation that are largely similar in intent and requirements.

## 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### 4.1 Introduction

The quality of life in a community is largely determined by the quality, quantity and distribution of its cultural and natural resources. East Hartford's rivers and streams, particularly the Hockanum and Connecticut rivers, exemplify this by providing the necessary drainage for the town, and also defining the natural landscape and providing a multitude of recreational opportunities. To guide future conservation and development efforts, it is important to understand the distribution of significant natural resource features that form the town's physical setting and in turn contribute to its character and quality of life. The following narrative briefly describes the significant natural resource features that comprise East Hartford's natural landscape.

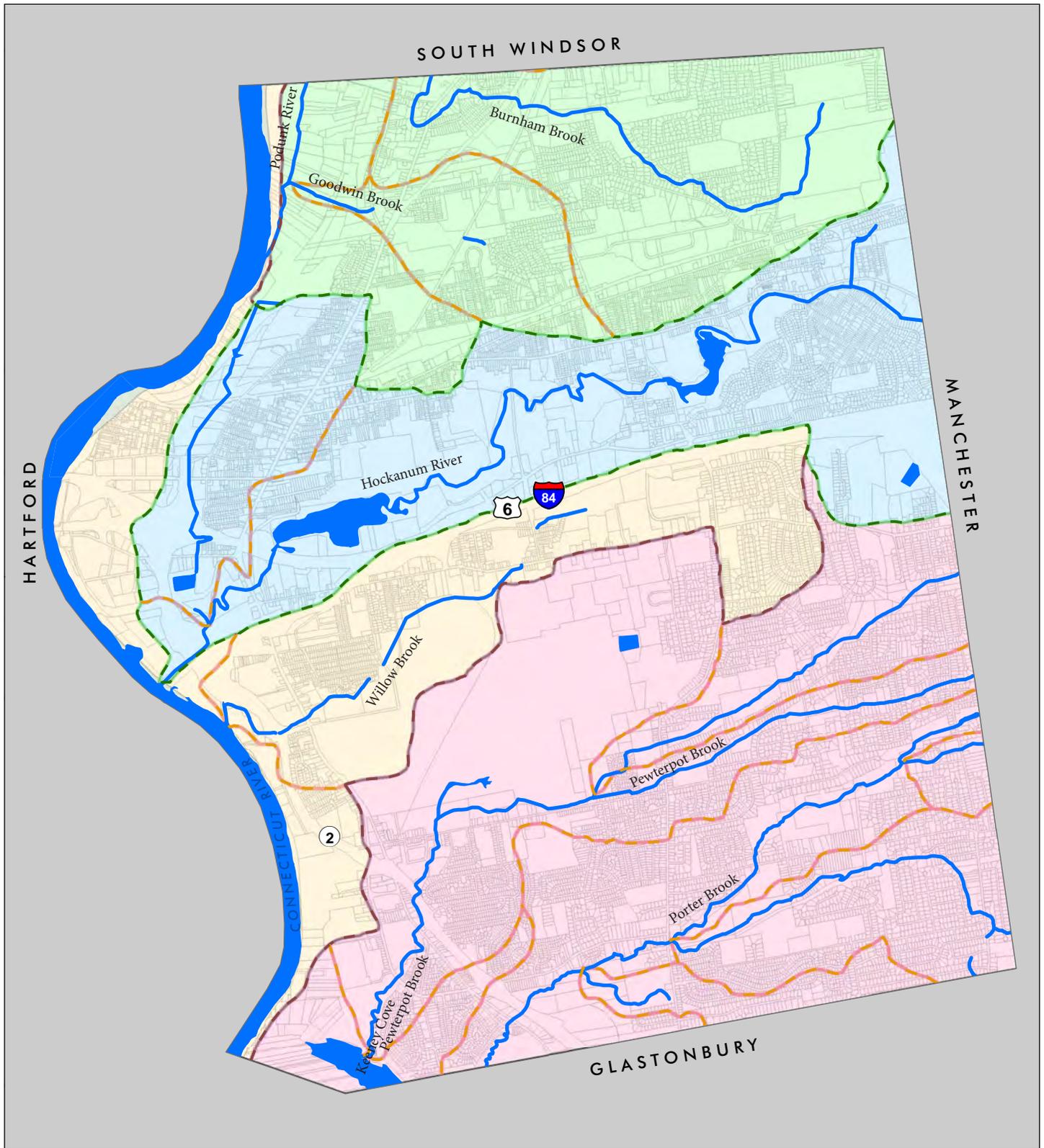
### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES GOAL:

*Promote the conservation and preservation of natural resources as part of future development activity.*

### 4.2 Rivers and Floodplains

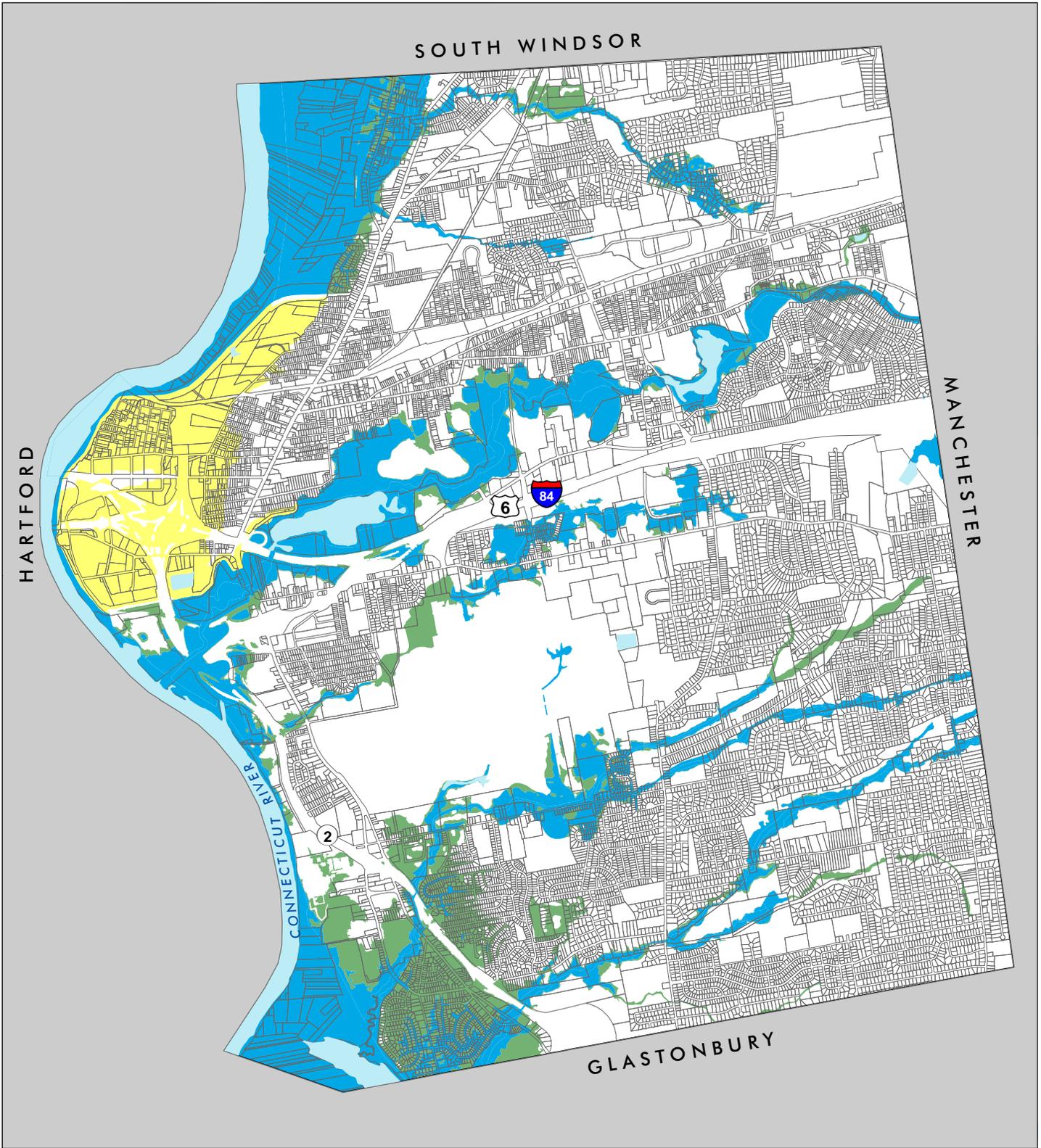
The Town of East Hartford encompasses approximately 18.8 square miles in total land area. As illustrated Figure 6, the town is located on the banks of the Connecticut River, bisected by its tributary, the Hockanum River. Due to the relatively flat landscape, East Hartford's drainage capacity is less than optimal. In fact, history has proven that flooding is a major concern among many of the Town's watercourses. Along the Connecticut River, flooding has been so severe that after the great floods of 1936 and 1939, which destroyed many of the buildings in the oldest parts of Town, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed the dike system that is in place today. The construction of the dikes (completed in 1941) and man-made drainage systems, such as storm sewers and pumping stations, have played a major role in the successful redevelopment of the riverfront area from the Bulkeley to the Charter Oak Bridges. However, the remainder of East Hartford is dependent on the network of natural drainage patterns, which are primarily brooks that feed into streams and eventually into the Connecticut River.

The 100-year floodplains of the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers were studied and mapped for the Federal Flood Insurance Program by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The general area of the 100-year floodplain is shown in Figure 7. Areas protected by the dike are also indicated. A large portion of the flood-prone areas along the river not included in the dike system remain as natural refuges within a suburbanized town. Although located adjacent to the river, the Goodwin College campus along Riverside Drive is sited at a higher elevation than the 100-year floodplain.



**Legend**

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Drainage Basin Boundary</b> | Connecticut River |
| Local                          | Hockanum River    |
| Regional                       | Podunk River      |
| Subregional                    | Salmon Brook      |



**Legend**

- AE Zone - Area of 100-Year Flood
- Area of 500-Year Flood
- X Zone - Protected by Levee

According to the most recent data provided by FEMA, it is estimated that approximately 2,350 acres of land which represents about 20% of the entire Town, is designated as 100-year floodplain. In order to protect the floodprone areas which were not artificially protected by the dike system, the Town incorporated floodplain zoning in its Zoning Regulations. Section 610 of the Ordinance regulates all land within the 100-year floodplain areas mapped by FEMA and requires a development permit for any new construction, alteration, conversion or enlargement of existing structures within the designated Flood Hazard Zone.

### **4.3 Watersheds**

East Hartford is comprised of four subregional watersheds, containing seven primary watercourses, which define the natural drainage system in the town. The rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and floodplains are components of watersheds that have the physical attributes necessary to support a variety of plant and animal life, attenuate flood conditions and provide residents with recreational opportunities. Even though nearly all the residents of East Hartford are currently on public water supply provided by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), protecting water quality is an important issue for the ecology of the region as well as for ensuring potential future development of public water supply wells if the need arises. Managing these watersheds in a sustainable manner is critical to ensure that the attributes they contain and the benefits they provide will be available for years to come. The following provides a general description of each of the Town's four subregional watersheds.

#### ***Connecticut River Watershed***

Like the other three subregional watersheds in East Hartford, the Connecticut River watershed is a component of the much larger *regional* Connecticut River Mainstem watershed, which extends roughly through the middle of the state from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound. The subregional Connecticut River watershed drains approximately 19% of the Town's total land area. The watershed not only includes the Connecticut River, but also Willow Brook, another primary watercourse in town.

Development within this watershed is very dense in the lower reaches of the Willow Brook and directly along the banks of the Connecticut River between the railroad bridge and the Charter Oak Bridge. Development of the density found along the river just north of Connecticut Boulevard would not have been possible had it not been for the construction of the East Hartford Dike in the early 1940s to hold back the river during the spring runoff. While the dike has had a positive effect on the amount of development in the watershed, such development has its consequences. One is that, as the density of development increases, the percentage of land covered by impervious surfaces (i.e. roadways, driveways, roof tops, etc.) also grows. This increase in the total amount of impervious surface in a watershed can have detrimental effects on water quality due to polluted runoff reaching the rivers and streams. In fact, numerous studies document these water quality impacts with evidence of stream impairment when total watershed imperviousness

reaches between 10% and 25%.<sup>3</sup> The Town has addressed this issue by incorporating maximum impervious surface requirements in its Zoning Regulations.

Since the last Plan of Conservation and Development, there has been substantial development along the Connecticut River and Riverside Drive, largely associated with the expansion of Goodwin College. As a result, this portion of the riverfront has experienced an increased amount of impervious surfaces, which requires proper stormwater management measures to ensure no adverse impacts on water quality.

Due to the relatively level topography within the watershed, 100-year floodplain areas are mapped along the majority of the Connecticut River in East Hartford, as well as the entire length of the Willow Brook, including the perennial portions between Applegate Lane and Westview Drive.

### ***Podunk River Watershed***

The Podunk River, originating in South Windsor, flows in a general southerly direction through the floodplains and wetlands of northwest East Hartford. While the actual length of the river in East Hartford is rather small, less than 1 mile of the approximately 13 miles of river, the Podunk River watershed drains approximately 20% of the Town's land area. Other primary watercourses that flow in this watershed include Goodwin Brook, which originates just west of the School Street and Prestige Park intersection, and Burnham Brook, which originates just north of the East Hartford cross-country ski and jogging trails off Long Hill Street.

The development patterns are the densest in the southwest portion of this watershed along Tolland Street. The remainder of the watershed primarily contains residential development and agricultural land uses, particularly in the northwest portion of the watershed along Main Street. FEMA has designated approximately 10% of the watershed's total area, as 100-year floodplain. One significant floodplain area is found in direct proximity to the Connecticut River. This northwest section of the watershed is an undeveloped part of town that contains an extensive wetland complex, productive farmlands and significant wildlife habitat. It provides an undeveloped respite from the urban landscape found in the Hartford/East Hartford portion of the Connecticut River. Additional floodplain areas within the watershed are narrowly defined along the Podunk River and the Burnham and Goodwin Brooks.

### ***Hockanum River Watershed***

The Hockanum River, originating in the town of Vernon, bisects East Hartford in an east-west direction and joins the Connecticut River just north of the Charter Oak Bridge. The Hockanum River is the town's largest tributary to the Connecticut River and drains approximately 22% of East

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<sup>3</sup> University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System, Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO); Siver, P.A., A.M. Lott, E. Cash, J. Moss and L.J. Marsicano. 1999. Century changes in Connecticut, U.S.A., lakes as inferred from siliceous algal remains and their relationship to land use changes. *Limnology and Oceanography* 44: 1928-1935.

Hartford's land area. The river is a very popular regional recreational resource, having a designated greenway through much of the town.

The development patterns in the Hockanum River watershed are most dense in the area along Main Street north of I-84. The remainder of the watershed is a mix of industrial, commercial and residential land uses including some open space areas. The density of development and the associated concentration of impervious surfaces has the potential to compromise water quality in the Hockanum River due to contaminated surface water runoff entering the watercourse.

Like the Podunk River Watershed, FEMA has identified a large portion of the watershed as 100-year floodplain. In fact, according to FEMA mapping, over 25% of the watershed's total area is considered floodplain.

### ***Salmon Brook Watershed***

The Salmon Brook originates in Manchester and flows just to the south of East Hartford through the Town of Glastonbury. While the Salmon Brook never actually flows into East Hartford, the Pewterpot and Porter Brooks contribute to its watershed and meet the Salmon Brook south of Keeney Cove before joining the Connecticut River. The Pewterpot and Porter Brooks are considered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as part of the Salmon Brook watershed and receive almost 40% of East Hartford's natural runoff, more than any other watershed in town. The watershed also hosts Keeney Cove and its surrounding wetland complex, which is regionally known for its diversity of wildlife, particularly bird species.

The development patterns in the East Hartford portion of the Salmon Brook Watershed are generally less dense than other areas of town and consist primarily of suburban residential development and open space land. However, agricultural and other non-residential uses such as commercial development and a portion of Rentschler Field are also found within the watershed.

The FEMA 100-year floodplains are broadly defined in the Salmon Brook Watershed as illustrated on Figure 4.2. The total area occupied by the 100-year floodplain totals approximately 5% of the watershed area. This area encompasses Keeney Cove and is located along the entire length of the Pewterpot and Porter Brooks.

## **4.4 Soils**

The soil types in East Hartford are a complex matrix of varying slope, depth, texture, permeability and fertility. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Hartford County, CT, the soil in East Hartford is comprised of 45 different soil classifications. While each individual classification has unique characteristics, there are particular attributes of certain soil types that are of particular interest due to their environmental sensitivity. These include wetland soil types, which are described briefly below. Steep slopes are not a prevalent feature of the town.

### **Wetland Soils**

Wetlands in Connecticut are defined by soil type. Those soils that are classified by the NRCS as Poorly Drained, Very Poorly Drained, Alluvial/Floodplain or any combination of these classifications are by definition considered wetland soils and protected under the Town's inland wetland regulations. The area classified by the NRCS Detailed Soil Survey as wetland soil types are illustrated in Figure 8.

Wetlands are important for a variety of reasons including:

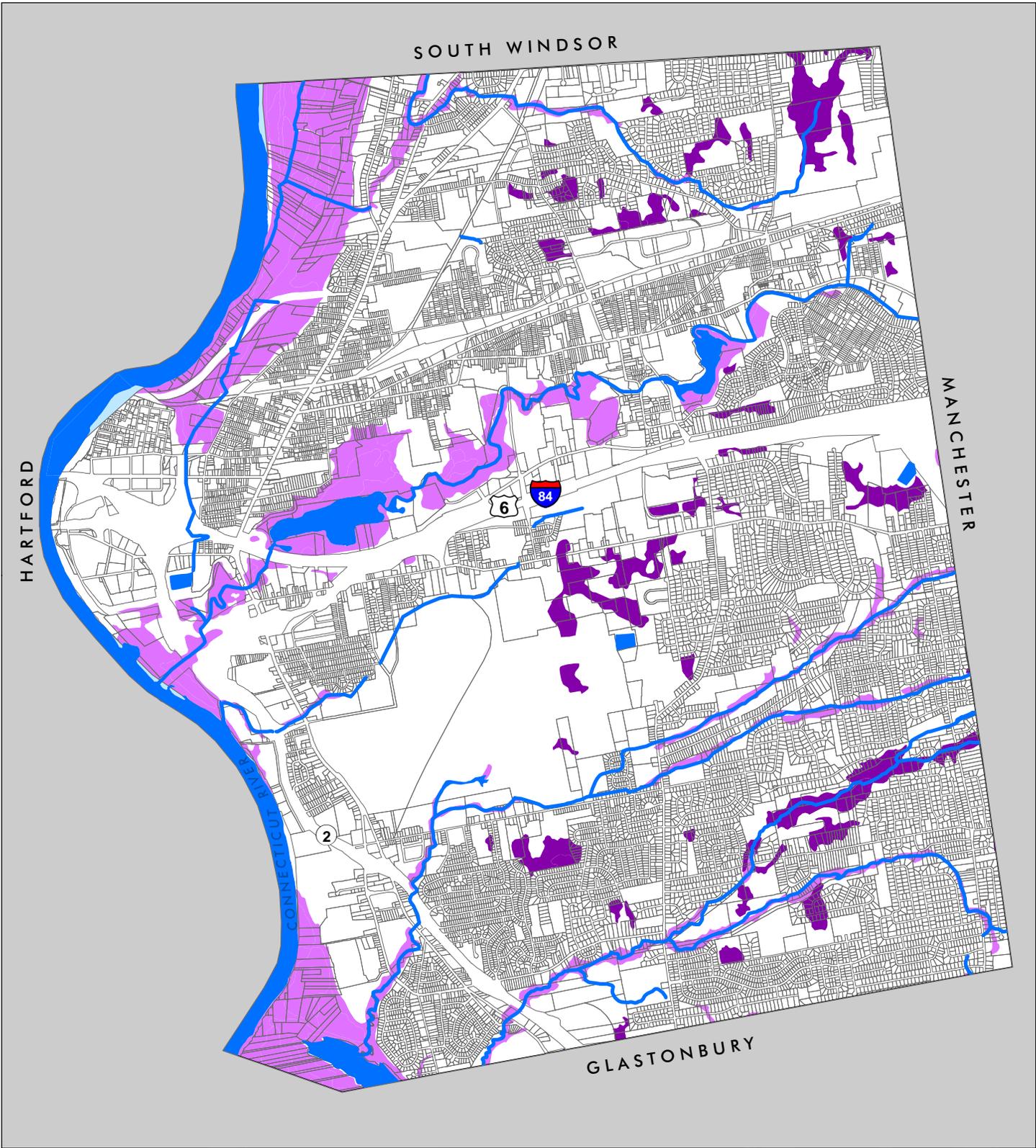
- Wetlands are among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world;
- Wetlands provide habitat that is critical to a variety of plant and animal species, including threatened and endangered species;
- Wetlands often function like natural sponges, storing water (floodwater or surface water) and slowly releasing it thus reducing the likelihood of flood damage to personal property or agriculture by controlling the rate and volume of runoff;
- Wetlands help improve water quality by intercepting surface runoff and removing or retaining its nutrients, processing organic wastes and reducing sediment before it reaches open water;
- Wetlands provide outdoor recreational opportunities (i.e. wildlife viewing/photography, nature study).

There are several areas along the Connecticut River that have been identified in the past as having "significant wildlife and/or ecological value."<sup>4</sup> Most of these are along the major wetland areas adjacent to the Connecticut River in the North Meadows (north and west of the dike). This ecosystem is highly productive, diverse and relatively free of human interference. In addition, there are three sub-areas which have distinguishing characteristics: a waterfowl area adjacent to the Knights of Columbus property on North Main Street; a shrub wetland north of Brook and west of King Streets listed as a good wildlife habitat; and Keeney Cove along the Glastonbury border, noted as a good bird and fish habitat.

These areas have remained relatively stable due to the regulated wetlands preventing development from encroaching on the area. In East Hartford, the Inland Wetlands Commission regulates wetlands through permits similar to those issued in the Flood Hazard Areas. The Commission also regulates activities within 100 feet of any wetland and within 200 feet of any watercourse. The general delineation of these regulated areas is illustrated on Figure 8. Official mapping used in the actual determination of the regulated areas is available in the East Hartford Engineering Department.

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<sup>4</sup> Existing and Future Land Use Plans for (the) Connecticut River Floodplain, Organization and Management of Resources and the Environment, 1979



**Legend**

- Poorly Drained and Very Poorly Drained Soils
- Alluvial and Floodplain Soils

## **4.5 Groundwater and Aquifer Protection**

The Town of East Hartford's public water supply system is provided by the Metropolitan District Commission, a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered to provide potable water and sewerage services on a regional basis. While this source of drinking water precludes the need for most residents to develop private wells for potable drinking water, conservation of groundwater resources is important for the protection of any potential future drinking water supplies as well as for the protection of the region's natural surface and ground water ecosystems.

The town lies upon a sizeable aquifer capable of yielding moderate to large amounts of water. The aquifer is described as being relatively shallow and therefore susceptible to contamination by infiltration of pollutants from the surface. While East Hartford's extensive sanitary sewer system helps protect against this type of contamination, groundwater contamination can still occur from non-point sources such as road contaminants and lawn fertilizers. A major source of non-point source pollution is the surface water runoff generated from impervious surfaces such as roadways and parking areas, where auto-related contaminants concentrate. Polluted runoff from these surfaces has the potential of infiltrating the water table and compromising ground water quality.

According to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Ground Water Quality Classification System, there are areas in Town where groundwater quality is presumed to be degraded. These areas, shown in Figure 9, are designated as class GB groundwater, indicating that this water is presumed not suitable for human consumption without treatment. The remainder of Town contains GA classified groundwater, indicating a quality that, at a minimum, is presumed suitable for drinking or other domestic uses without treatment. The 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development recommended that a provision be incorporated into the zoning regulations that calls for aquifer protection in order to protect the water supply in East Hartford in case it were ever needed over the long term to meet the drinking water supplies of the region. This recommendation has not yet been fulfilled, and therefore is recommended again in this Plan update.

## **4.6 Sustainability**

As defined by the American Planning Association, sustainable development "maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend." Achieving a sustainable future by balancing conservation and development is a central idea that runs throughout the chapters of this POCD. The Town of East Hartford supports sustainable development through an integrated approach to planning for land use, transportation, the environment, housing, economic development and infrastructure.



**Legend**

- Ground water within a historically high urbanized area or an area of intense industrial activity. Such ground water may not be suitable for human consumption without treatment (Class (GB))

PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT    **FIGURE 9: GROUND WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATIONS**

### **Sustainable Design/Green Building Practices**

Many communities are pursuing measures to encourage, and in some cases mandate, green or sustainable building measures, or the practice of creating healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance, and demolition. Research and experience increasingly demonstrate that when buildings are designed and operated with their lifecycle impacts in mind, they can provide great environmental, economic and social benefits.

Elements of green building include:

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Water Stewardship
- Environmentally Preferable Building Materials and Specifications
- Waste Reduction
- Elimination of Toxics
- Indoor Environment
- Smart Growth and Sustainable Development

In Connecticut, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2009 to develop *Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development*. The report provides smart-growth strategies related to low-impact development, community development, green buildings, resource preservation, energy conservation, transportation, groundwater protection, recycling and waste management. A companion document, *Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Region*, provides examples of development challenges and opportunities through representative examples, several of which are specifically relevant to opportunities present in East Hartford:

- Infill redevelopment in an existing residential neighborhood
- Greyfield redevelopment of a dead shopping center in a retail corridor
- Infill development in a functioning but underused shopping center

The report is intended for individuals and entities that are involved in the planning, design, financing, development and regulatory decisions about their town centers, neighborhoods and regions. East Hartford should utilize the report, especially when considering regulatory frameworks and strategies that promote sustainable development.

Nationwide, buildings are responsible for nearly 40% of all carbon dioxide emissions. In order to address this important issue, many municipalities across the country are encouraging green building practices through development standards and site plan review practices. A national standard for sustainable or green building design has been developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). This standard, referred to as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), promotes the design and



construction of buildings that conserve energy, save water, reduce carbon emissions, improve outdoor environmental quality and encourage stewardship of environmental resources. LEED is a voluntary program that provides a common standard of measurement for green buildings, recognize environmental leadership in the building industry, stimulate green competition and raise consumer awareness about the benefits of green buildings.

While LEED has historically applied to commercial buildings, recently the USGBC created the LEED for Homes Certification program, which promotes high-performance, green single and multifamily homes. The USGBC also offers a Green Home Guide that provides guidance on increasing the energy-efficiency of existing homes. It provides resources aimed at helping homeowners save energy (and money) through a variety of measures such as insulating attics and windows, planting shade trees, and replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).



Through Connecticut's Green Buildings Tax Credit Program, building owners and developers are eligible for tax credits if they construct, renovate or rehabilitate commercial properties to LEED's Gold Standard. East Hartford currently has no provision or incentive for green buildings using LEED-type certifications within the Town Ordinance. The Town should update its ordinance to encourage sustainable design practices. One option might be a rebate on building permit fees based on the level of LEED-type compliance.

### **Energy Conservation**

Another aspect of sustainable building practices is the use of energy-efficient products and practices that conserve energy and thus avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The Town can lead by example by working to retrofit existing municipal facilities to make them more sustainable and energy-efficient. East Hartford has already taken a large step in this direction by completing a \$12.3 million energy retrofitting project for its public facilities. This project, discussed further in Chapter 6, included lighting retrofits, energy management systems, HVAC and burner replacements, pool covers and solar panels. Additional actions the Town should consider to improve its energy efficiency include, where possible, upgrading equipment to meet higher environmental standards. This might include smaller items such as office equipment, and larger items such as the acquisition of hybrid electric cars for the Town's departmental fleets.

In addition, the Town should support existing and create new innovative programs to conserve energy. EnergyStar, a joint project of the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, is a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products. A number of communities have passed legislation mandating that certain types of uses purchase EnergyStar-labeled products or requiring some types of residential buildings to conform to EnergyStar Homes criteria.

Connecticut Light and Power's Plan-It Wise energy pilot program recently demonstrated that customers will use significantly less energy during peak times of electric usage when rates for peak period use are higher than those for off-peak use. The Town should work with CL&P to encourage participation in such programs. East Hartford may also consider exploring a "green homes program" through which it could encourage homeowners to make energy-saving improvements to their homes. One model is found in the Town of Babylon, New York, which has created an innovative green homes program that lets homeowners pay for energy-saving home improvements with benefit assessment financing. That town offers assistance for home improvements up to \$12,000, which the homeowner then repays with money saved on utility bills every month.

### **Land-Use Regulations and Site Plan Approval**

An important way in which East Hartford can enhance the sustainability of its built environment is through its land-use regulations. Zoning, site plan, subdivision and inland wetland regulations are the primary tools through which the Town controls land use. These regulations should be reviewed and updated to promote green, low-impact development and environmental conservation. East Hartford should establish green goals to guide this effort. *Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Region* provides a variety of policies and land use regulations that should be considered. Examples of green land-use regulations that should be explored are listed below:

- Reducing parking requirements, where appropriate, and implementing innovative parking solutions such as shared parking.
- Encourage features that promote bicycling and walking (i.e. bulb-outs, bike racks, crosswalks, benches, continuous sidewalks, buildings oriented toward the street)
- Encouraging green building practices including the use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Requiring on-site stormwater retention.
- Establishing regulations requiring undisturbed buffers and setbacks along the Connecticut River and along large and/or high functioning wetland areas.

Protecting groundwater and minimizing potential sources of contamination should be an important aspect of East Hartford's sustainability strategy. The Town should work to promote sustainable landscape design as part of its site plan review process. Landscaping should break up continuous pavement of interior parking areas. This will provide aesthetic improvements and improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow. It will also help to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces, thus reducing the amount of runoff entering surface waters and groundwater. Semi-pervious surface products such as permeable pavers should be used instead of asphalt or concrete pavement within low traffic areas, such as parking areas. In general, East Hartford should encourage the use of pervious paving materials to the maximum extent practicable and minimize impervious surfaces in recreation and open space areas.

Natural landscape elements should also be preserved to the maximum degree possible, with re-grading of land kept to a minimum. Landscaping can buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial uses. Lots abutting residentially-zoned land should include densely planted strips of deciduous trees and shrubs, landscaped berms and fencing to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. Where a building façade cannot be used to frame the sidewalk edge, landscaping such as hedges, shrubs or low walls and fences should be used. Regularly spaced street trees should be planted between roadway and sidewalk in order to provide a sense of protection for pedestrians. Rows of trees can also help to visually unify parking lots and buildings that line commercial roadways. Tree plantings can provide an effective screen to parking lots located adjacent to major roads.

The Town should examine existing regulations for groundwater and surface water protection to determine whether or not they adequately address current groundwater issues and concerns. East Hartford may wish to consider encouraging and/or requiring additional measures to enhance local recharge, including installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surfaces. In addition, the Town should work to educate landowners about ways to conserve water and properly dispose of household chemicals. It should also discourage the use of chemical lawn treatments and pesticides. Standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties adjacent to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas should be considered. Within subdivisions, open areas should be designed to serve as filters, buffers, swales, wet and dry ponds and detention and retention areas. Public open areas such as parks and playgrounds should be designed to filter polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas. As discussed above, reducing impervious surface area will help the Town achieve its groundwater protection goals.

## **4.7 Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the above discussion, this section recommends several items to be addressed through Town action or further study.

### **4.7.1 Take steps to further protect water quality.**

East Hartford has a strong history of protecting the various watercourses running through the town, including the preservation of significant areas of open space along rivers and streams, to reduce water quality impacts from stormwater runoff and other impacts of development. The Town should continue that tradition by implementing a recommendation of past plans: incorporating a provision into the zoning regulations that calls for aquifer protection in order to protect the water supply in East Hartford should it be needed in the future to supply drinking water to the region as a whole. While there is no indication that this water source is required in the immediate future, planning for its potential need would be a prudent step as part of a long-term strategy to protect critical environmental resources.

#### **4.7.2 Implement measures to promote sustainability and “green” building.**

This chapter outlines a number of specific actions that East Hartford can implement to enhance overall sustainability, some of which are also discussed elsewhere in this Plan including:

- Review regulations for opportunities to tighten controls of impervious coverage.
- Adding a provision or incentive within the Town Ordinance for green buildings using LEED-type certifications (e.g. a rebate on building permit fees based on the level of LEED-type compliance).
- Reducing parking requirements, where appropriate, and implementing innovative parking solutions such as shared parking.
- Encourage features that promote bicycling and walking (i.e. bulb-outs, bike racks, crosswalks, benches, continuous sidewalks, buildings oriented toward the street)
- Encouraging green building practices including the use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Requiring on-site stormwater retention.
- Establishing regulations requiring undisturbed buffers and setbacks along the Connecticut River and along large and/or designated high functioning wetland areas.
- Upgrading municipal equipment to meet higher environmental standards.
- Supporting programs to conserve energy, such as promoting the use of EnergyStar products and exploring a “green homes program.”



## 5.0 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

### 5.1 Introduction

The quality, quantity and variety of parks and open spaces are important attributes that help define the character of a community. The strength of East Hartford's community character lies in its stable residential neighborhoods and the abundance of parks and recreational facilities that serve them. In addition, natural passive open spaces have been protected, providing a respite from the urbanized landscape and adding to the Town's character. The benefits of parks and open space are varied, in that they provide opportunities for social interaction and healthful activity; help preserve natural features and environmentally sensitive areas; and enhance community character, improving property values and the marketability of neighborhoods.

Recreation activity in East Hartford has evolved over the years to the point where organized sports and formal recreation programs are the focus of adolescent active recreation. The increasingly high participation and longer length and variety of sport seasons require dedicated facilities, an important consideration when creating capital improvement plans for the community. However, providing opportunities for informal recreation activities (i.e. walking, jogging, skating, bicycling) is also important to meet the growing needs of the community. Greenways or linear trails, such as the Hockanum River Greenway, help provide this opportunity. When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities (i.e. schools, libraries), increasing their accessibility from residential areas.

As described in the East Hartford Strategic Economic Development Plan<sup>5</sup>, the Town's open space network is a key amenity for economic development. The Town's current assets – natural land and developed recreation space – also represent future opportunities for enhancement or expansion, which can link with the Town's potential.

Open space and recreation development contributes to economic development by:

- Encouraging new business and helping to keep existing businesses
- Representing a symbol of the community's quality of life
- Providing an attractive town design and environment
- Forming part of the infrastructure for new development sites

Conversely, economic development can also contribute to open space and recreation development by:

- Creating linkages to the open space framework
- Encouraging developers to set aside open space within their parcels

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<sup>5</sup> Town of East Hartford, Strategic Economic Development Plan & Land Use Recommendations, Clough, Harbor & Associates LLP; The Williams Group Real Estate Advisor, LLC & Hutton Associates, Inc. May 2000.

- Providing increased tax revenues for park and recreation development and operations, as well as for open space acquisition.

The park and open space resources found in East Hartford are, in general, geographically distributed throughout the Town and are accessible to most of the population. They can be considered one of the Town's signature assets, as they provide green space that helps break up the suburban development patterns and provide recreational opportunities to the surrounding neighborhoods. The challenge is to continue to maintain and enhance these critical spaces so that they meet the changing needs of the community, while recognizing the Town's responsibility for managing its limited resources.

### **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS:**

*Provide a system of linked public and private open space that offers both passive and active recreation opportunities and that protects environmentally sensitive areas.*

*Maximize access to and utilization of parks and recreation facilities for all residents.*

*Promote the conservation and preservation of open space and natural resources as part of future development activity.*

*Improve and protect the quality of life in the Town by encouraging the improved use, maintenance and rehabilitation of the park and open space system to ensure they are adequate in extent, strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Town's population.*

## **5.2 Existing Parks and Open Space**

Lands in East Hartford considered parks and open space have been inventoried and categorized based on public or private ownership. Figure 10 illustrates the existing publicly and privately owned active and passive recreation and open space areas, as well as proposed expansions to those facilities. The active recreation facilities consist of parks, playgrounds, ballfields and schoolyards, while passive areas include greenways, Town-owned floodplains and flood control properties and open space areas. Cemeteries are also included in the inventory as passive open space areas.



In addition to Town-owned property, Figure 10 shows lands held for conservation by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust and private recreation and open space areas such as Wickham Park, Saint Christopher and Saint Rose schools and the Pratt & Whitney (Aircraft Club) fields. Given the missions of their owners, these lands are likely to remain in open space use and continue to support the recreation, conservation and preservation objectives of this plan.

The network of waterways found within the Town, particularly the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers, have provided a baseline for successful greenway implementation. An example of these efforts includes Riverfront Recapture, which has turned the Connecticut River waterfront in both Hartford and East Hartford into a major regional cultural and recreational asset. East Hartford's Great River Park offers walking and biking trails, boat launch areas, an amphitheater and nature study areas. Great River Park is part of the overall Riverwalk network, which includes Hartford's Riverside Park, Riverfront Plaza and Charter Oak Landing, connected to East Hartford by walking paths over the Founders Bridge and the Charter Oak Bridge.

Other successful greenway projects in East Hartford include the Hockanum River Linear Park, which extends almost the entire length of the Hockanum River in East Hartford and stretches through the Town of Manchester into the Town of Vernon; the Charter Oak Greenway, a multi-use trail that runs parallel to I-84 from Forbes Street to Route 83 in Manchester; and the Captain John Bissell Greenway, which connects the Charter Oak Greenway in East Hartford to the Bissell Bridge in South Windsor. Expansion of the greenway system by adding connections to neighborhoods, community facilities and parks will improve accessibility to the system and enhance the quality of life in the Town.

The current inventory of recreation and open space totals approximately 1,328 acres<sup>6</sup>. The land included in the inventory is summarized in Table 8 and is categorized based on whether it is primarily used for active or passive recreation. Active recreational facilities are defined as areas that accommodate organized sporting activities such as baseball, basketball, soccer or tennis. These facilities may also provide playscapes for younger children. For the purposes of this inventory, active recreational facilities have been further categorized by whether they are associated with a school facility. Passive recreational facilities are areas that provide low-impact recreation such as hiking or picnicking with minimal development or improvements. Improvements to passive recreation facilities typically include little more than park benches or picnic areas. Some areas included in this inventory function as natural conservation areas (i.e. floodplain) and are generally left as natural, undeveloped open space.

The University of Connecticut football stadium at Rentschler Field is an active recreational facility of statewide significance. While the stadium can be seen as contributing to East Hartford's recreation opportunities, because of its fairly limited use for that purpose, it has not been included in the inventory of Town parks and open spaces.

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<sup>6</sup> Total excludes the three East Hartford linear parks: Charter Oak Greenway, Hockanum River Linear Park and Captain John Bissell Greenway, as these parks are measured in linear miles rather than acreage.

**Table 8: Parks and Open Space Inventory, 2013**

Active Open Space		Passive Open Space	
<u>Public Parks</u>		<u>Public Ownership<sup>3</sup></u>	
	Acres		Acres
Alumni Field/Town Green	4.4	Bicentennial Square	2.3
Dwyer Park	23.8	Bray Property	69.7
Foran Park	11.5	Brewer House/Gardens	1.4
Goodwin Park	7.3	Center Park	2.2
Gorman Park	63.3	DiPietro Park <sup>2</sup>	7.0
Labor Field	11.6	East Hartford Nature Park	41.7
McAuliffe Park/Norris Elementary <sup>1</sup>	45.5	Great River Park	21.8
Martin Park	26.5	James Property	12.0
Millbrook Playground	2.0	Keeney Cove	101.7
Shea Park	9.0	Kilty Property <sup>2</sup>	7.9
Long Hill Country Club	102.1	Landers Road Park	2.6
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>307 acres</i>	Lange Property	12.9
		Short Reach Property <sup>2</sup>	5.3
<u>Public School<sup>1</sup></u>		Town-Owned Flood Control Dike	148.9
East Hartford Middle School	18.5	Town-Owned Floodplain	34.5
East Hartford – Glastonbury Magnet	7.7	Unnamed Open Space (near high school)	8.6
East Hartford High School	35.7	Unnamed Open Space (Main Street)	3.3
Goodwin Elementary	6.4	Unnamed Open Space (next to Synergy HS)	10.4
Hockanum Elementary/Park	16.0	Veterans Memorial Park	18.2
Langford Elementary	19.0	Woodlawn Circle Open Space	2.6
Mayberry Elementary	7.3	Yanner Property	10.8
O’Brien Elementary	13.1	Former Landfill	97.9
O’Connell Elementary	3.3	Former Elks Property	32.0
Pitkin Elementary	14.3	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>655.7 acres</i>
Silver Lane Elementary	2.7		
Sunset Ridge Elementary	6.0	<u>Private Ownership</u>	
Synergy High School	19.5	East Hartford Patrolmen & Firemen	6.9
Willowbrook School	2.5	Harry James Park <sup>2,4</sup>	0.7
Woodland Elementary	2.5	Mary Jane Williams Park <sup>4</sup>	40.2
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>174.5 acres</i>	Riverpoint Park <sup>2,4</sup>	1.0
		Wickham Park	22.5
<u>Private Ownership</u>		<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>71.3 acres</i>
Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Club	19.3 acres		
		<u>Cemeteries</u>	
		Center Cemetery	11.4
		Hillside Cemetery	31.4
		Hockanum Cemetery	2.7
		Silver Lane Cemetery	37.9
		Old South Cemetery (Private)	0.9
		Saint Mary’s Cemetery (Private)	15.5
		<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>99.8 acres</i>
<b>Active Total</b>	<b>500.8 acres</b>	<b>Passive Total</b>	<b>826.8</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL: 1,327.6 ACRES</b>			

(1) Acreage represents area used for recreational purposes only

(2) New acquisition since 2003

(3) Does not include linear parks: (Charter Oak Greenway, Hockanum River Linear Park and Captain John Bissell Greenway)

(4) Indicates land held by the Manchester Land Trust

Source: Town of East Hartford Department of Parks and Recreation; Manchester Land Trust; 2003 POCD

### **5.3 Active Recreation Facility Overview**

East Hartford's diverse array of active recreational facilities is a tremendous asset to the Town and its residents. The 27 parks, school facilities and open spaces included in the inventory represent a broad spectrum of active uses, ranging from walking, jogging and biking trails to baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts and playscapes. These active spaces in total comprise over 500 acres of recreational area.

The Town has three parks that are the showpieces of its parks and open space system. The McAuliffe Park/Norris Elementary School complex in the northern end of East Hartford includes an outstanding baseball facility, a swimming pool, softball and Little League baseball fields, basketball courts and play areas for children. Since the 2003 POCD, the Town has completed a lighting project for the park's softball field and upgraded dugouts at its Trassio Field. Renovations to the tennis courts are needed. The complex is also tied in with another community asset, the North End Senior Center, adjacent to McAuliffe Park along Remington Road, which provides recreational opportunities for residents of all ages in the northern and central areas of East Hartford (see Chapter 6 for more information on the senior center).

Martin Park, located off Burnside Avenue, is another prime recreational facility for East Hartford. Its baseball, football and softball field, popular skateboard park, swimming facility and play areas are important assets in the central part of the town. The park's connection with the Hockanum River Linear Park via an attractive pedestrian bridge enables neighborhood access to a regional open space network of parks and trails. Martin Park has seen a number of upgrades since the 2003 POCD, including renovations to its football field, pool deck and picnic pavilions.

Finally, Gorman Park, located in the southern end of town, is East Hartford's largest multipurpose park and has the potential to become the Town's flagship park. The park contains the Lord Pool, a renovated pavilion picnic area, two basketball courts, four baseball fields and a soccer field. Much of the park's area, including the pond in the central portion, is unused and represents an opportunity to significant enhancement to the Town's recreational network.

Other important active recreational assets include the Long Hill Country Club (formerly East Hartford Golf Club), a public 18-hole course in the northeastern section of town, and East Hartford's five outdoor pools: Gold Star Pool in Goodwin Park, Lord Pool in Gorman Park, Terry Pool in Hockanum Park, Drennan Pool in McAuliffe Park and the Martin Park Pool. Several of the pools are in need of renovation or replacement given their age, especially Drennan Pool (built in 1964) and Martin Park Pool. Because of their condition and generally low public attendance at the public pools, the Town should consider replacing one or more of the pools with a splash pad complex, which are ideal for younger children and can be less expensive to operate because of the limited need for lifeguards.

Perhaps most importantly, East Hartford's parks system has at its foundation a network of small neighborhood and school-associated recreational facilities. These facilities provide an infusion of needed recreational space into residential neighborhoods, while also serving as important links in

the overall parks and open space system and connecting the schools to the neighborhoods. Enhancing this existing solid foundation, in cooperation with the East Hartford Board of Education based on individual school needs, should receive top priority. If proper attention is not paid to the local foundation of the parks system, not only will individual neighborhoods lack sufficient recreational resources, but the entire town-wide open space network will be weakened.

Several key privately held facilities also exist within the town boundaries. Although the Town exercises no direct control over the use of these facilities, the properties are important parts of the overall recreation and open space network in East Hartford.

#### **5.4 Passive Recreation Facility Overview**

Passive recreational facilities tend to be largely unimproved areas that provide low-impact recreation including hiking, birdwatching and picnicking. Often, these areas serve as landscaped buffers between non-compatible and sensitive land uses, such as transportation corridors and fragile wetland environments. Passive recreational lands can serve ecological purposes by protecting significant environmental areas (e.g. floodplains and mature forests) or by playing a role in stormwater management. However, these minimally developed areas should be properly maintained to ensure that they are safe and free of litter or dumping.

East Hartford's most significant passive open space assets are its dedicated trails, which help to knit together the Town's overall open space network, and to link it to neighboring communities.

- **Hockanum River Linear Park Trail:** This 3.5-mile boardwalk and stone dust trail extending roughly from the Charter Oak Bridge east-northeast to the Manchester town line. The trail, which will ultimately run 4.6 miles, connects a number of key Town assets, including the riverfront, Town Hall, dedicated parks and open space areas and schools. Parking facilities are located at Hillside Street, Martin park, Elm Street and Town Hall. Phase 3 of the Hockanum River trail is planned to continue to connect gaps. This phase which will the greenway by approximately 3,700 feet, from Hillside Street along the Hockanum River eastward toward the historic mill at the end of Cottage Street before connecting back to Old Robert Street.
- **Charter Oak Greenway:** This 9.8-mile paved bike trail runs from East Hartford, through Manchester, to Bolton. The trail originates at Forbes Street and Ridgewood Road in East Hartford, running eastward along I-84 and I-384, and is part of the East Coast Greenway. It is planned to continue along Silver Lane and through Rentschler Field, eventually connecting with anticipated waterfront access along the Connecticut River.
- **Captain John Bissell Greenway:** This is a short spur of the Charter Oak Greenway that runs under I-84 to connect with segments of the East Coast Greenway in Manchester.

Other important passive recreational assets include the 22-acre Great River Park along East River Drive, which has picnic areas, boat launch facilities, an amphitheater and a riverwalk; the 42-acre Nature Park in the northeast portion of town, with hiking trails; and the 18-acre Veterans Memorial Park which has a clubhouse available for rental. In addition, large areas of

undeveloped open space are found throughout East Hartford, including at Keeney Cove and on floodplain areas north of the Bulkeley Bridge.

Cemeteries, while not typically considered to serve a recreational function, nonetheless have an important role to play in the distribution of open space, as they can provide a much-needed respite of green space from their urbanized surroundings. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, East Hartford has six cemeteries, four of which are Town-owned, totaling approximately 100 acres of land.

Finally, the Town's Department of Parks and Recreation offers several special-purpose facilities for use or rental by East Hartford residents. These include the Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse between Silver Lane and I-84, the Community Cultural Center across from the Town Green and the Selden Brewer House on the southern end of Main Street.

## **5.5 Future Open Space System**

East Hartford is fortunate to have an existing park and open space system that is in relatively good condition, well distributed geographically and diverse in the types of uses accommodated. In looking to the future, it will be important to maintain parks and open spaces that are adequate in extent, strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Town's population. The future of existing parks and open space will depend in part on the efficient use of the existing facilities as well as the maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities requiring improvements.

### **5.5.1 National Recreation and Park Association Standards**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed a set of standards based on the various types and functions of parks within communities. These standards are meant to be applied with an individualized community planning approach, with communities planning and programming their facilities based on identified local need. In general, NRPA suggests that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a "core" system of parklands, with a total of 6.26 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population.<sup>7</sup> Applying this standard to East Hartford's 2010 population of 51,252, this suggests a range of 320.3 acres to 538.1 acres. As indicated in Table 8 above, the sum of existing active recreational space along is approximately 500 acres, suggesting that, when including various passive recreational areas that are fully developed, the Town's total open space network would satisfy the NRPA's suggested minimums.

### **5.5.2 Criteria for Future Open Space Acquisition**

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<sup>7</sup> *Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996.

In selecting areas to focus future open space acquisitions, it is helpful to develop criteria from which to identify priority open space parcels. This Plan focuses primarily on protecting land that provides the following benefits:

- Provides new neighborhood parks
- Links existing parks and open spaces together to form interconnected greenways
- Links existing parks and open space to neighborhoods and the downtown area
- Preserves agricultural land
- Preserves natural drainage areas including waterways and surrounding wetlands and floodplains

Based on East Hartford's current recreational patterns and budgetary constraints, this Plan suggests that new neighborhood parks are not a high-priority need at this point. Well-utilized neighborhood parks such as Dwyer Park, Goodwin Park, Shea Park and Foran Park are geographically dispersed throughout the town to serve residents, and recreational facilities at schools provide another important mechanism to serve individual neighborhoods. Given the recent location of several magnet and charter schools in East Hartford, the Town may consider working with the operators of these schools to ensure that public recreational space can be located on those campuses to serve the immediate vicinity.

The remaining criteria listed above are equally as important today and should be maintained to judge the benefits of acquiring future open space as land is made available to the Town. However, the benefits of acquiring such open space should be carefully balanced against the cost of long-term maintenance and loss of taxable land. Prioritizing areas for open space protection is an important component of this Plan because it helps focus resources on property that has the highest open space value, rather than acquiring open space just because it becomes available.

### **5.5.3 Open Space Protection Focus Areas**

The criteria defined above are helpful in identifying areas of town to focus open space protection efforts, as summarized below.

#### ***Farmland Protection***

The preservation of some of the remaining farmland in East Hartford would help retain a sense of the Town's former rural origins. The State Farmland Preservation Program has expressed little interest in acquiring farmland in East Hartford. Therefore, in order for farmland preservation to be successful in East Hartford it will have to be part of a locally led effort. The Town has an opportunity to take the lead in preserving farmland in East Hartford and establishing a municipal farmland preservation program that identifies and protects farms that benefit overall community character. To aid in this effort, the Town should explore available resources, such as the American Farmland Trust, which has a field office in Connecticut and is providing technical

assistance to a number of municipalities in the state to implement strategies such as initiating an Agriculture Commission, reviewing farm tax reduction options, encouraging buy-local opportunities and developing right-to-farm ordinances. Other tools that may be considered include transfer of development rights, land banking, agricultural zoning and the use of conservation subdivisions.

### ***River and Floodplain Protection and Stormwater Management***

As discussed in Chapter 4, East Hartford's relatively flat landscape creates a less than optimal drainage capacity. This is evidenced by the large expanse of floodplain along the town's major watercourses. Protection of East Hartford's remaining undeveloped floodplains (particularly along the Connecticut River) and the land that directly abuts watercourses is critical to ensure that natural drainage patterns are retained and that storm water runoff can be controlled. River and floodplain protection should be focused on all of the town's major watercourses.

### ***Rentschler Field***

Redevelopment of Rentschler Field has the potential to expand the Town's open space network. The Capitol Region Council of Governments has identified this potential and has initiated an extension of the Charter Oak Greenway, to cross Rentschler Field and connect to the existing Riverwalk located along the Connecticut River. This expansion would link two popular greenways and provide a walking path that bisects the entire town in an east-west direction. In addition, the proposed roadways within the Rentschler Field development should make provisions for both pedestrian and bikeway paths.

The parcels that make up Rentschler Field contain wetland areas and include sections of the Pewterpot Brook that are prone to drainage problems. Preservation of these areas as part of any development proposals would help retain the natural drainage patterns in this area.

### ***State and Utility Owned Property***

Surplus property owned by electric utilities or surplus state property should also be considered if these lands become available. The Town should evaluate these properties based on the above-mentioned criteria for purchase or donation into the town's open space network.

### ***Linkage and Expansion of Existing Open Space (Greenways)***

The network of waterways found within the Town, particularly the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers, have provided a focus for successful greenway implementation. The Hockanum River Linear Park, Charter Oak Greenway and the Riverwalk are all prime examples of successful greenway projects. The primary open space goal over the next decade should be to build on these successful linear trails and attempt to create a network of linkages between existing open spaces. The Capitol Region Council of Governments has taken the first step in this effort by initiating the extension of the existing Charter Oak Greenway to connect with the Riverwalk trail network. This would create another east-west linkage that somewhat parallels the Hockanum Greenway, albeit on the south side of I-84. The real challenge in greenway planning for the

Town is in establishing north to south linkages to connect existing open spaces. Possible north to south connections include pedestrian and bikeway paths in Rentschler Field; expanding the Charter Oak Greenway southward toward the High School; taking advantage of property on the east side of Rentschler Field; and expanding the Riverwalk trail along the banks of the Connecticut River south to Keeney Cove and north toward South Windsor.

### ***Implementation Tools and Techniques***

Because it is difficult to predict when property will become available for incorporation into the open space inventory, the Town must be prepared to respond quickly. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in their open space plans, many municipalities designate an open space task force or a land trust made up of community volunteers and/or staff with a particular interest or expertise in open space planning. One of the responsibilities of an open space task force is to develop a strategy to help fund open space acquisitions and maintenance. Such a strategy identifies potential grant and fundraising opportunities.

Implementation tools commonly used to protect open space can be divided into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory. Regulatory tools use the development process to implement controls to protect natural features or to establish open space, such as the following:

- **Site Planning Regulations**
- **Inland Wetland Regulations**
- **Zoning Regulations** i.e. Preservation overlay zones (special district zoning)
- **Subdivision Regulations** – Open space dedication requirements and/or In Lieu Fees

Non-regulatory tools used to protect open space usually involve some type of ownership status. The following are examples of some of the more common techniques:

- **Fee Simple Purchase** – Involves the outright purchase of land
- **Easement** – A partial interest in property conveyed by the landowner to the Town or a non-profit such as a land trust with specific restrictions on land development or access privileges.
- **Land Trust** – Private, non-profit organizations that acquire land for recreation or conservation. The establishment of an East Hartford Land Trust, or greater coordination with the existing Manchester Land Trust, should be explored.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides financial assistance to municipalities or non-profit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space. This grant program provides matching grants to communities like East Hartford for up to 65% of the property's fair market value. The Town has a unique opportunity to leverage its status as a DEP-designated "Targeted Investment Community" in its application to this grant program to acquire open space.

## **5.6 Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the above discussion of existing conditions, this section recommends several items to be addressed in the Future Land Use Plan or through further study.

### **5.6.1 Focus on Maintenance and Improvement of Existing Parks**

East Hartford has a significant network of active and passive open spaces, which contributes greatly to its community character and vital neighborhoods. The challenge now is to ensure that these open spaces are adequate and appropriate to serve their surrounding communities. To that end, the Town should closely follow the criteria listed above for acquisition of new open space, and acquire such lands only if those criteria or another compelling public purpose are met. Acquiring open spaces without such strict adherence can result in properties that have little practical function and are costly to maintain.

Rather, the Town should focus its resources on upkeep and renovations at its existing parks. One area that has been identified for enhancement involves East Hartford's public pools. Some of these facilities are quite old and can be costly to operate, due to the need for lifeguards and other seasonal staff. The Town should evaluate whether five public pools are still needed based on its changing demographics and fiscal realities. One or more of the pools could be considered for replacement with splash pad facilities, which are geared toward younger children and do not require a significant lifeguard presence. Such replacement should be based on the current and anticipated usage at each pool, as well as current conditions and the cost to rehabilitate each pool to modern standards.

Another area for the Town to evaluate is the future of Gorman Park. The 2003 POCD identified this facility as one of great potential, but much of it remains undeveloped. East Hartford should undertake a master plan for this park, to determine what uses would be most appropriate given overall open space and recreational needs in the town.

Finally, the Town should continue its efforts to make connections among existing parks and greenways. The redevelopment of Rentschler Field and other key sites offers an opportunity to gain meaningful public open space through the planning and approvals process. For example, Goodwin College has recently acquired substantial property along the Connecticut River, and has expressed a desire to provide public access to the riverfront, eventually as far south as the Putnam Bridge connecting Glastonbury and Wethersfield. Such as extension of the existing Riverwalk pathway would create a significant open space asset, not just for East Hartford, but for residents of the region. The Town should work with the college and other private land owners along the waterfront and adjacent to other greenways to implement these connections.

### **5.6.2 Consider Options for Underused Passive Recreational Spaces**

Presently, East Hartford has several large open spaces that are not developed for a particular recreational use. Some of these spaces abut existing parks or are in close proximity to greenways,

and thus present future opportunities for creating linkages, through strategic acquisition of connecting properties. Others are relatively isolated, and their primary role may be acting as vegetative buffers to neighborhoods. The Town should explore alternatives to reduce its cost of open space maintenance. One option may be to explore transferring one or more open spaces to a land trust or other nonprofit organization, to be responsible for ongoing upkeep of the space, which would continue to be preserved. The Town should also consider establishing public-private partnerships for development of underutilized open spaces into usable recreational assets. There may be opportunities for uses that generate user fees and revenue generation opportunities, such as additional facility rentals, concession agreements, etc. These arrangements have the potential to create funding for enhancements to East Hartford's treasured parks and open spaces, without substantially diminishing their overall quality.



## 6.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 6.1 Introduction

A principal function of local government is to provide the infrastructure and community facilities which allow for the sustained use and enjoyment of private property in the community. The availability, condition, capacity and cost of municipal infrastructure determine land-use mix and density and are key ingredients in defining the local quality of life. This chapter surveys the physical aspect of serving these functions through programs administered in town-owned facilities. Each of the functional service areas will be examined in light of existing programs, utilization levels and facilities. Functional areas include: police and fire departments, town offices, libraries, schools, and senior and youth services. Figure 11: Community Facilities locates town and school district properties.

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS:

*East Hartford should provide community facilities and services which respond to residents' needs in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner.*

*Effectively manage and control stormwater drainage to minimize hazards to property and the public and protect East Hartford's built and natural environment.*

### 6.2 Existing Conditions

#### 6.2.1 Water System

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) provides the Town of East Hartford's entire water supply system. The MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1929 to provide potable water and sewerage services on a regional basis. Today, the MDC provides quality water supply, water pollution control, mapping and household hazardous waste collection to eight member municipalities in the Greater Hartford Region, including East Hartford. Figure 12 identifies the streets currently served by the water system. MDC has the ability to provide all of its East Hartford customers with the water they require.

#### 6.2.2 Sanitary Sewer System

The MDC also maintains sanitary sewerage systems that provide service throughout the Town. Figure 13 identifies the location of streets served by the sanitary sewer system. The MDC's existing system has the capacity to extend its service to all undeveloped areas in East Hartford. The Town should ensure that MDC receives a copy of this POCD for review so it can coordinate the necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate future growth.

### 6.2.3 Storm Sewer System

In its entirety, the Town of East Hartford's storm sewer system has not been formally inventoried or assessed since 1980. The absence of an updated version of this study leaves the Town without an updated list and summary of existing drainage conditions. With increasing State and Federal mandates for local comprehensive plans and reviews concerning stormwater quality improvement efforts, the Town should undertake a comprehensive inventory of the Town's storm sewer system in order to develop a plan that would meet federal and state regulations.

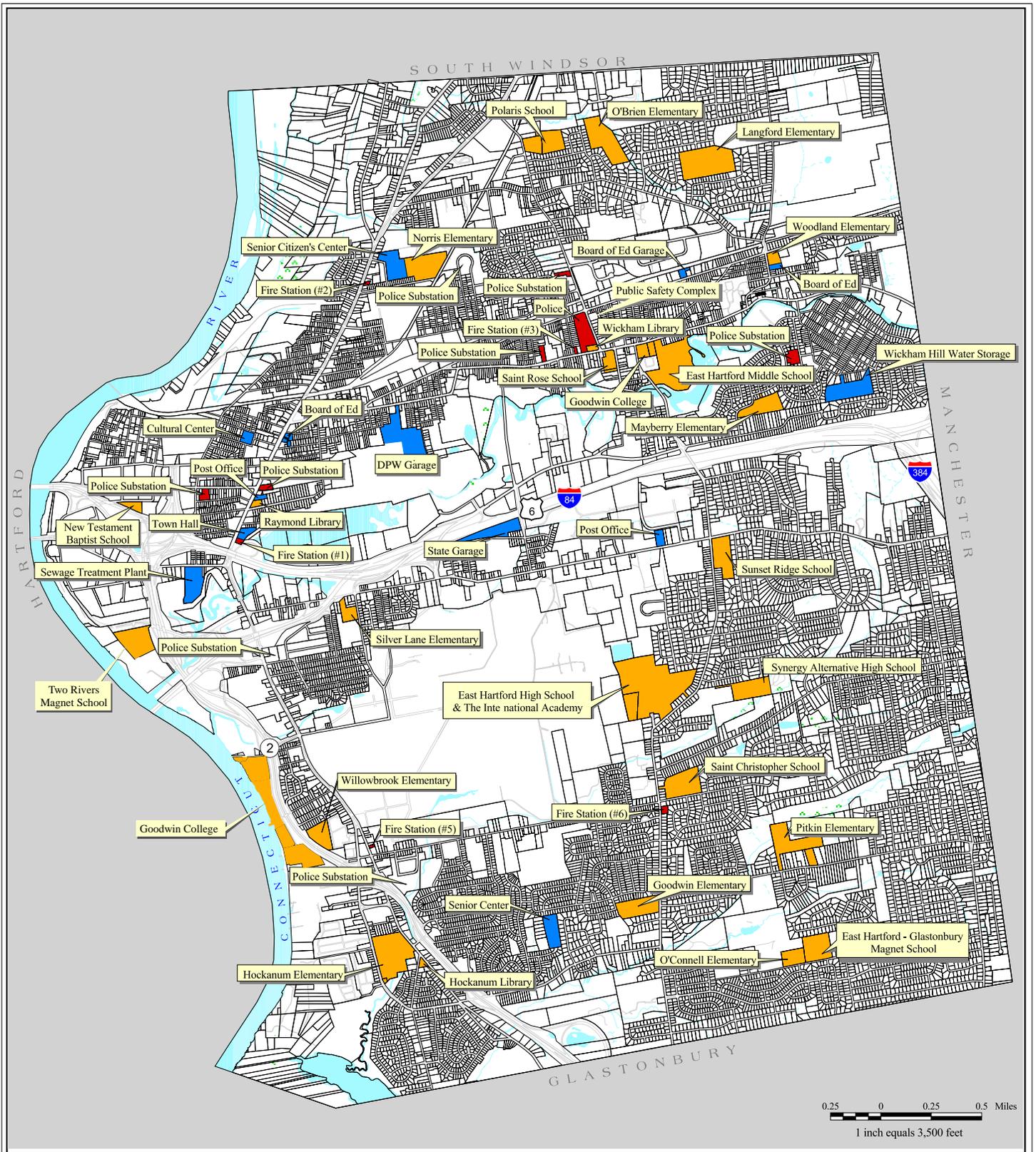
The Town owns and maintains a network of earthen dikes that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built in the 1930s and upgraded in the 1990s, as well as three stormwater pumping stations that pump water over the dikes during heavy rainstorms. While gravity allows the water to flow into the Connecticut River when its water level is low, high river level conditions (usually during the early spring when the northern snow melt makes its way to the local watercourses) prevent this gravity-driven flow and require that the water be pumped over the dike.

After Hurricane Katrina, the Corps began to re-evaluate their built dike systems around the country for structural vulnerabilities that were exposed by the hurricane. In 2007, the Corps notified the Town that the dike system, which was previously deemed acceptable, had similar issues to those that caused the dikes in New Orleans to collapse during Katrina. The Corps required East Hartford to begin the process of maintenance and facility corrections. Since then, the Town has appropriated funds for repair process and



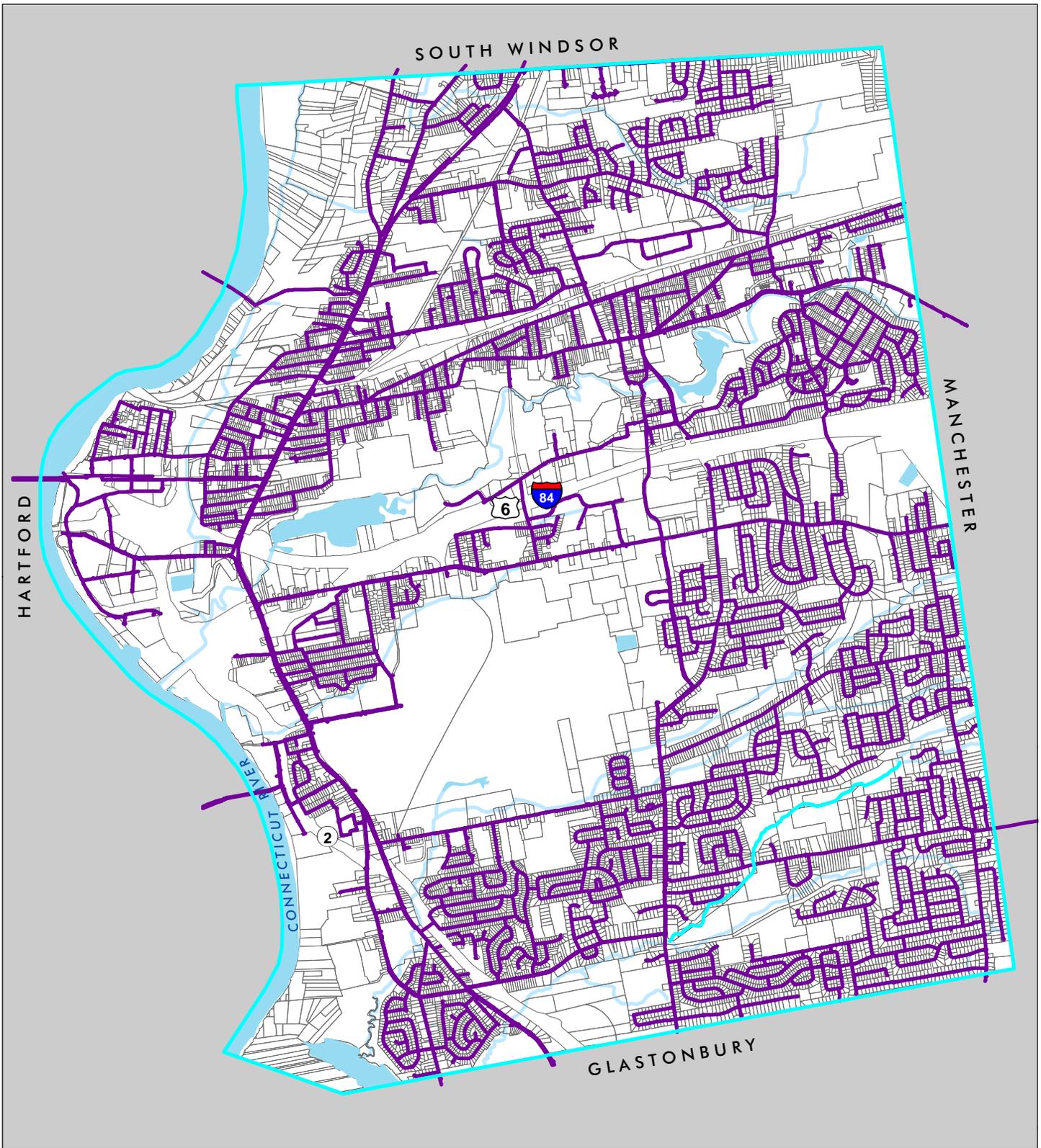
has received passing marks on the upkeep of the dikes. However, further work is needed, and the Town should continue to fund this project. If the dikes fail inspection and are de-certified by the Corps, the Town – as well as more than 1,000 residents and business in the flood zone – would be ineligible for federal assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) if the dikes failed during a flood.

**Dike system along the Connecticut River.**  
*BFJ Planning*



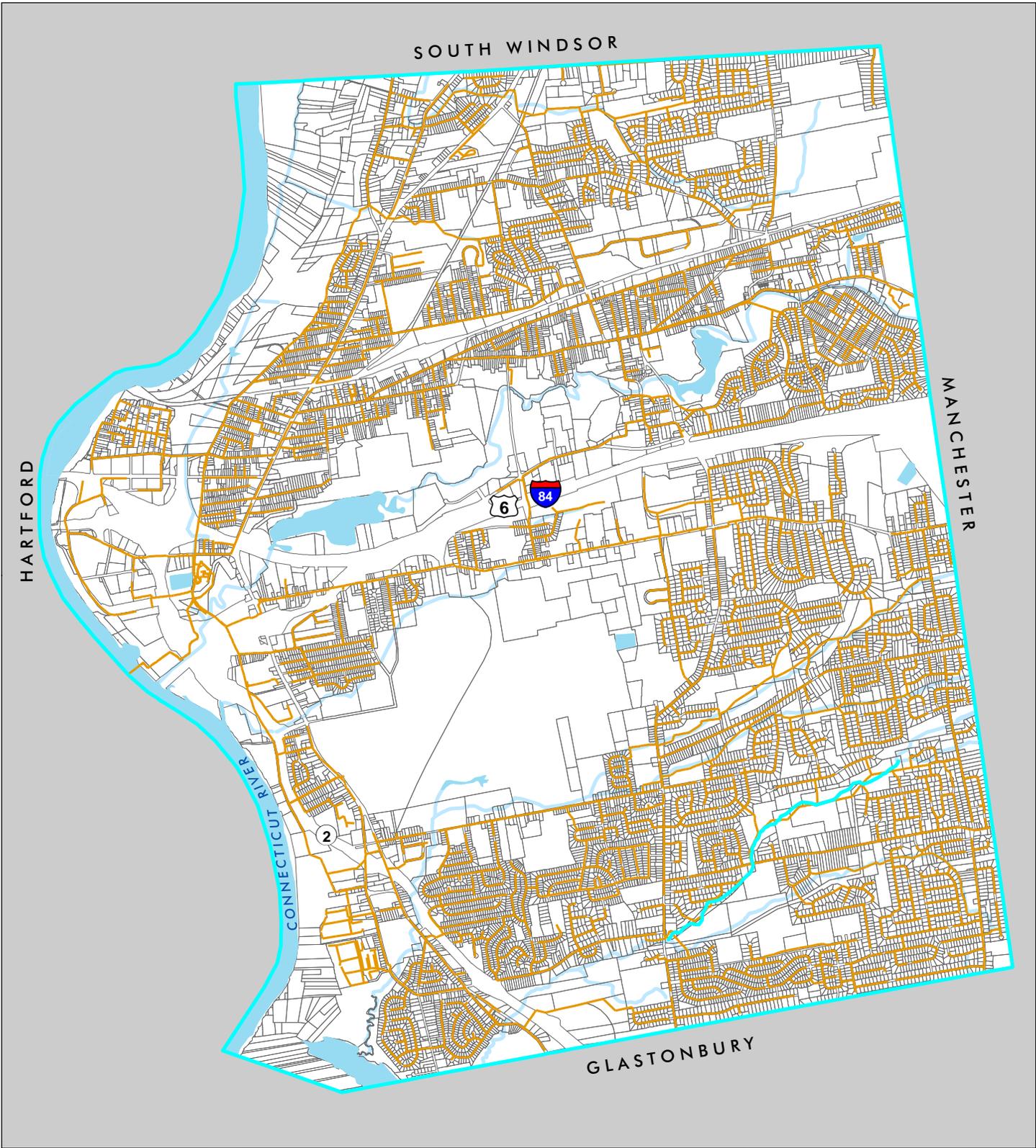
**Legend**

- Schools & Libraries
- Public Safety
- Community Facilities & Services



**Legend**

— Water Line



**Legend**

— Sanitary Sewer Line

#### **6.2.4 Fire Protection**

The municipally operated East Hartford Fire Department provides the Town's fire protection services, operating from five stations with five paramedic engine companies, two ladder companies, one rescue company and a shift command vehicle. The Department also staffs a Fire Marshals Office, Medical Division, Apparatus Repair Division, Fire Alarm Division, Office of Emergency Management and Training Division. The Department is staffed by 133 career firefighters and six civilian support personnel. Structural resources include the five fire stations, an apparatus repair facility and an office for the Fire Prevention Division.

At the time of the 1989 East Hartford Building Utilization Task Force Report, all five stations were in need of replacement, as their outdated facilities and inadequate spatial arrangements and dimensions created challenges for the everyday functions of public safety personnel. Since that report, Station #5 was replaced, while renovations for Stations #1 and #2 are planned to occur in the next two years. In addition, a new Public Safety Complex was constructed behind the Police Station to accommodate the Fire Department's new headquarters. This complex also replaces Fire Station #3.

In the past 30 years, demand for fire protection services in East Hartford has steadily grown. In 2007, the Department responded to 9,442 calls, a roughly a 10% increase from the call volume received in 2003. Demand is expected to increase with continued development activity in the town, including the expansion of Goodwin College, the development of Rentschler Field and the construction of new infill housing.

In 2008, the Fire Department prepared its first comprehensive strategic plan to evaluate its current position and shape the direction of future operations. The planning process involved the cooperation of Fire Department personnel as well as other town departments, agencies, the public and from the community's elected leaders. A detailed survey of all Department personnel was completed to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Another survey of elected officials and peers assessed the economic, environmental and technological factors that affect the Department's ability to serve the Town's citizens. The Strategic Plan's recommendations included:

- Adding a multi-company, centrally located station (in progress: Station #1 to be replaced)
- Maintaining updated apparatus and light fleet vehicles on a rotating basis
- Adding increased communication capabilities and a wireless network to the Emergency Operations Center
- Maintaining the latest technology in radio, phone and internet capabilities
- Upgrading all fire stations with fiber-optic network capabilities
- Working with the MDC and Connecticut Department of Transportation to add fire hydrants to bridges and highways in East Hartford

- In addition, the Strategic Plan recommended higher staffing levels in identified areas, improved recruitment and retention of firefighters and paramedics, advanced training, various technological improvements and improved code enforcement standards.

### **6.2.5 Police Protection**

The requirements of municipal police protection have changed over the past several decades in East Hartford as well as in other communities, reflecting the town's growth and larger societal shifts. The Police Department is based at the new East Hartford Public Safety Complex at 31 School Street, built in 2004 at the renovated former Burnside School. This complex addressed the long-standing need to provide a modern, efficient facility to meet the Town's public safety needs. The old Police Headquarters at 497 Tolland Street was demolished, and the land became part of the grounds of the Public Safety Complex.

The Police Department also maintains eight substations at 546 Burnside Avenue, 102 Columbus Avenue, 101 Connecticut Boulevard, 75 Hamilton Road, 886 Main Street, 70 Plain Road, 163 School Street and 81 Woodland Circle.

### **6.2.6 Library Services**

The East Hartford Public Library System consists of four libraries with a total collection of approximately 200,000 books, and more than 10,000 CDs, cassettes and videos. The Raymond Library, at 840 Main Street, is the Town's main library and is scheduled to be renovated and expanded in the near future. The other three library branches are Hockanum Library, at 165 Main Street; Penney Alumni Library, at 869 Forbes Street; and Wickham Library, at 656 Burnside Avenue. The Penney Alumni Library also operates as the East Hartford High School library.

Between 1888 and 1889, the Raymond Family constructed the main library branch as an endowment to the Town. The town currently leases the building from the Raymond Family Trust at a nominal fee, provided that the library maintains an area specifically for the Tobacco and Aviation Museum and provides a park on the grounds. Gradual growth in the size of the library's collection led to an addition in 1968 and included a 10-year growth allowance. A \$6.1 million expansion is planned for 2013, which would roughly double the size of the library, from 2,000 to 4,000 square feet. Included in that expansion would be a larger children's room with new computers and an activity room, a teen section on the first floor and expanded stack space and seating areas. Raymond Library will be closed for up to 18 months for the project, with operations moved to the East Hartford Community Cultural Center.

The Town's library system participates in CONNECT, a program of the Capitol Region Library Council, in which a network of 26 public and academic libraries share an automated library system. Benefits of this program include faster cataloguing; a shared system database; quick and easy sharing of collections via an Interlibrary Loan; and the collection of staff expertise, training, consultation and troubleshooting. As the Town's libraries increasingly rely on cooperative activity with surrounding municipalities to provide cost-effective services, any future plans should explore

the advancements that come with technological developments and shared resources.

### **6.2.7 Solid Waste Disposal**

East Hartford addresses its solid waste disposal needs through a variety of means. The Town operates a transfer station off Burnside Avenue on Ecology Drive; executes service contracts with the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA), Covanta Energy and the Town of Manchester; and runs a recycling program. East Hartford has a goal of recycling 25% of waste generated from within the town and recycles all materials as required by law. In 2010, East Hartford switched to a single-stream curbside recycling program, allowing for all recyclables to be collected together in one cart. Homes served by the curbside pick-up program have trash picked up every other week.

Under a consent order issued by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Town of East Hartford closed and capped its landfill in October 2001. Since that time, the Town has worked to find long-term disposal solutions for bulk waste. In August 2010, East Hartford joined the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority, a group of towns that were looking to bring more competition into the waste disposal market. The Town negotiated a three-year contract (ending in 2014) with Covanta to dispose of waste in Willimantec at a tipping fee of \$59.50. The Willimantec facility has unlimited capacity, as it is a waste-to-energy facility. East Hartford also disposes waste at the Manchester landfill at a tipping fee of \$62 per ton. Covanta also provides the option for the Town to dispose of leaves for free at a location in Peabody, Massachusetts.

The MDC organizes household hazardous materials collection for residents of member municipalities. Each municipality that executes a contract with the MDC has an annual collection of hazardous materials at a specified in-town site. While there is no permanent location for the ongoing collection of hazardous materials throughout the year, residents of East Hartford can bring their hazardous materials to the collection day of any other customer municipality, providing numerous opportunities throughout the year to dispose of hazardous waste.

While East Hartford's service contract with Covanta is an efficient and cost-effective means of disposing of its solid waste, the Town is vulnerable to shifts in the economy and technology that may affect the costs that the Covanta will face, and inevitably pass on to the towns through the rate they charge for their tipping fee. Given these conditions, the Town should focus on its strategies to improve its waste disposal and recycling efforts.

### **6.2.8 General Government Facilities**

Municipal government is administered primarily from East Hartford Town Hall at 740 Main Street. Town Hall was previously evaluated in two separate studies: the Building Utilization Task Force

Report (July 1989) and the Vollmer Associates Study of Town Owned Buildings (August 1988). Both reports expected staff increases would lead to a deficiency of space, but noted that Town Hall's historic features were a significant factor in discouraging the construction of a new replacement facility. Town Hall in its current location is also an anchor to the central business district. Given these issues, the Town has begun to adapt the building to accommodate changing government functions. This includes the relocation of some departments to other buildings (such as the Parks and Recreation Department to the East Hartford Community Cultural Center), redesign of the building interior and structural expansion into the courtyards.

While the Town Hall and Community Cultural Center provide space for the functions of administering town services, a number of other facilities are maintained by the Town to store and maintain the equipment used by various divisions to provide municipal services. The Department of Public Works vehicle maintenance facility is located on Ecology Drive, and maintains all municipal vehicles except for those belonging to the East Hartford Fire Department, which are maintained at a facility on Tolland Street. The Fire Department vehicle maintenance facility lacks sufficient space and overhead clearance that sometimes forces some maintenance to be conducted outdoors.

At present, the DPW vehicle maintenance facility is serviceable due to short-term repairs done in 2012; however it is rapidly deteriorating and needs to be addressed. Many of the offices at the site have been scrapped together over time and are inadequate need to be replaced. Buildings in need of expansion or replacement include the sign shop and eviction storage facility, the park maintenance division office, the attendance station for the transfer station, and the administrative office. Overall drainage and sewage infrastructure also needs to be expanded at the facility. Additional space for fuel tanks which are approaching the end of their life (2019) and storage (for documents, computers, equipment and furniture) is needed. These issues could be accommodated as part of a new DPW complex. The Town should evaluate the need for a new complex with a fiscally prudent method that assesses the cost of the new facility against the future maintenance costs of the existing facilities.



**Department of Public Works Garage on Ecology Drive.**



*BFJ Planning*

Another general government facility is the Highway Services Garage, also located on Ecology Drive. Similar to the vehicle maintenance facility, the Highway Services Garage does not have enough space to accommodate all of the division's equipment. Despite the Department's best efforts to limit the negative environmental impact that is caused by material and equipment left outdoors, a history of run-off issues on the site has resulted partially from the spatial deficiencies of the current facility. One ongoing improvement is the construction of a new salt dome, which will be able to shelter approximately 25,000 tons of salt from the rain and snow. While this project is a result of a CT DEEP mandate, it runs parallel to the Town's efforts to minimize the run-off from the site.

Another need is an equipment washing facility to serve Town vehicles. Currently, the MDC allows the Town to use its modern truck-washing facility in Hartford for a moderate fee. However, this outlying location is inconvenient for those workers who are not returning from the South Meadow solid waste station. The typical use of this facility also does not address the need to wash the inner chamber of the garbage trucks, which is precisely the portion of these trucks that needs cleaning the most. Given these conditions, the Town will need to solve the issue concerning a washing facility for Town equipment in the upcoming planning period.

The Town recently completed a \$12.3 million energy retrofitting project for its public facilities. This project included lighting retrofits, energy management systems, HVAC and burner replacements, pool covers and solar panels. Since the improvements have been implemented, East Hartford has been saving more than \$600,000 annually, which is being used to pay the financing cost of the project.

### **6.2.9 Educational Facilities**

#### ***East Hartford Public Schools***

The East Hartford Public School system consists of 16 schools and serves approximately 6,800 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Board of Education administrative functions are housed in a facility at 1110 Main Street.

Table 9 presents a summary of each school facility.

The School District also operates the Connecticut IB Academy (CIBA) and Synergy Alternative High School. In 2003, CIBA relocated from the East Hartford High School to its own facility nearby on Forbes Street. CIBA's International Baccalaureate program focuses on developing well-rounded and globally minded students, and it has been consistently recognized as an exemplary school, receiving honors from the U.S. Department of Education and Magnet Schools of America. The mission of the Synergy School is to provide a small (limited to 100 students), personalized and innovative high school program for dissatisfied or unmotivated students who may benefit from an alternative setting.

**Table 9: Summary of East Hartford Public Schools**

BUILDING	ADDRESS	YEAR BUILT	GRADES	ADDITIONS	SQ FTG.	ACRES	# of Classrooms	2013/14 Enrollment
Central Admin	1110 Main Street	2004			22,558	6.18		
Thomas S. O'Connell School (East)	301 may Road	1957	K - 2	1965	29,300	10.9	26	132
East Hartford High School	869 Forbes Street	1962	9 - 12	1963, 68 & 72	394,000	50.75	89	1678
Center International Baccalaureate Academy	857 Forbes Street	2003	9 - 12		26,000		12	195
East Hartford Middle School	777 Burnside Ave	1954	6, 7, 8	1959, 68, 72	255,000	30	66	1064
Joseph O. Goodwin School	1235 Forbes Street	1968	K - 6		54,200	9.15	26	279
Hockanum School	191 Main Street	1949	Pre K - 6		51,800	9.74	25	286
Dr. John A. Langford School	61 Alps Drive	1972	K - 6		49,800	9.61	22	371
Dr. Franklin H. Mayberry School	101 Great Hill Road	1959	K - 6	1996	49,000	7.04	28	343
Anna E. Norris School	40 Remington Road	1957	K - 6	1962 & 1996	37,000	2.46	21	277
Robert J. O'Brien School	56 Farm Drive	1961	K - 6	1962 & 1967	60,800	16.2	30	479
Thomas O'Connell School (West)	301 May Road	1959	3 - 6	1967	49,800	5.5	15	510
Governor William Pitkin School	330 Hills Street	1966	K - 6		44,400	15	24	320
Silver Lane School	15 Mercer Avenue	1928	K - 6	1955 & 1998	46,000	4.28	23	282
Stevens Alternate High School	40 Butternut Drive	1966	9 - 12		27,700	9.67	12	60
Sunset Ridge School	450 Forbes Street	1949	4, 5, 6	1951 & 2000	64,950	11.22	34	261
Willowbrook Early Childhood School	95 Willowbrook Road	1955	Pre K	2,000SF Portables	21,140	4.6	12	99
Woodland School	110 Long Hill Drive	1929	TEP	1949	42,800	7.42	18	127
<b>TOTALS:</b>					<b>1,303,690</b>	<b>203.54</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>6,763</b>

Source: 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development, East Hartford Public Schools

School enrollments have been rising since 1991, when the system accommodated 5,880 students, peaking at 7,982 students in the 2000-2001 school year. While there appears to be enough capacity to handle expected enrollments over the short term, changing programmatic requirements, repair and code compliance for an aging building stock, and retrofitting to accommodate new technologies may generate the need to upgrade capital facilities over this plan period.

The East Hartford Public School district consists of (18) eighteen buildings totaling over 1.3 million square feet within 203 acres of land. The Department of Facilities is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of all buildings and grounds.

In 2003, the Board of Education offices were renovated at 1110 Main Street. The renovation to the 2,000-square-foot facility included updated interior space and relocation of the Board's maintenance facility to a site on Tolland Street. These improvements should accommodate the Board's administrative facility needs through several planning periods.

### **Other Educational Facilities**

Since East Hartford's last POCD update, there has been significant growth in the number of non-municipal school facilities, most notably to Goodwin College's rapid expansion at its main campus along Riverside Drive. Beginning in 2004, the College began purchasing land along the Connecticut River. Much of the area was designated a brownfield site, having previously been home to an oil terminal. The college remediated and redeveloped the sites in partnership with State and Federal environmental agencies and the Connecticut Development Authority (CDA).

Goodwin College now owns approximately 660 acres along a three-mile stretch of the river. Some 29 acres are available for buildings, with the rest located within a floodplain. Future planned uses include athletic fields, an outdoor laboratory for environmental studies and open areas for public recreational use. The college owns the deep-water docks on this part of the river.

Goodwin College's core services are provided in a 110,000-square-foot academic building that houses 35 technically advanced classrooms. Degree programs include business administration, criminal justice, education, health-care fields and manufacturing. Enrollment has grown significantly – increasing by 6% from 2011 to 2012 – and degree-credit enrollment was more than twice as large in 2012 as it was in 2008.

Over the past few years, Goodwin College has built three new inter-district magnet schools, all of which it owns and operates. The first, located adjacent to the college, is the Connecticut River Academy, a high school with an environmental studies theme. The school follows the "early college" model, enabling students to graduate high school with up to 30 collegiate credits. Pathways to Technology is a City of Hartford public school operated in Windsor in partnership with Goodwin College. Its state-of-the-art facility fosters learning in areas such as robotics, nanotechnology, sound recording and advanced computer design. The college also runs the Early Childhood Magnet School, which opened in September 2013. The 34,000-square-foot facility houses both a full-time pre-kindergarten program and a full-day kindergarten.

In addition to these three magnet schools, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) operates the Two Rivers Magnet Middle and High School on East River Drive, and the Glastonbury-East Hartford Elementary Magnet School in the southwestern portion of town, both of which have a science and technology focus. CREC also operates an alternative high school called the Polaris School that is located on School Street.

Several private parochial schools also provide elementary and secondary education in East Hartford, including St. Christopher School on Brewer Street, St. Rose School on Burnside Avenue and the Baptist Church School on Ash Street.

As discussed, East Hartford has a large number of non-municipal school facilities, which, while providing benefits to the town and region, require Town resources for emergency services and road maintenance, and their land area is not taxable. Given the potential for further expansion of these facilities, the Town must decide how to balance facility needs with municipal fiscal realities.

### 6.2.10 Senior Citizen Centers

The role of senior citizen centers has been changing. In the past, they were primarily social and recreational centers, and while they still serve those functions, the two East Hartford senior citizen centers have also become the base for the provision of social services to the town’s elderly population.

The North End Senior Citizen Center and the South End Senior Citizen Center, located on the north and south ends of Main Street, respectively, provide services and programs to East Hartford residents 55 years of age and over. Recreational, social and informational programs comprise the core of activities.

The Town’s elderly population has decreased over the past decade; the 2010 Census reports that the number of people age 65 and over fell by 8.9% since 2000. However, UCONN’s population projections for East Hartford predict an increase of 18% for persons aged 65 and over during the period 2010-2025<sup>8</sup>. If these projections prove to be accurate, the Town’s current stock of facilities for senior citizens are likely to be overburdened in the future. East Hartford has recently secured funds from the state to make improvements to existing facilities. The Town is also in the planning stage to determine future needs and whether a new facility or addition is necessary.

### 6.2.11 Cemeteries

There are six cemeteries in East Hartford, four of which are owned and maintained by the Town; Table 10 presents an inventory of these facilities. All of the cemeteries are still active to some extent, but most of the available space in these cemeteries is sold. Hillside Cemetery is one of the Town’s largest cemeteries and is rapidly filling up. Silver Lane Cemetery is currently the most active, and has recently been expanded. Most of the plots this expansion have been purchased. Of all the cemeteries, Silver lane is only one that has additional land available for expansion.

**Table 10: Cemeteries in East Hartford**

Facility	Location	Acres
Hillside Cemetery (Town owned)	224 Roberts Street	31.4
Center Cemetery (Town owned)	948 Main Street	11.4
Hockanum Cemetery (Town owned)	47 High Street	2.7
Silver Lane Cemetery (Town owned)	1310 Silver Lane	37.9
Old South Cemetery (Town owned)	196 South Meadow Lane	0.9
Saint Mary’s Cemetery (Private)	910 Burnside Avenue	15.5
Total		99.8

<sup>8</sup> Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center MAGIC. (2012). *2015-2025 Population Projections for Connecticut at State, County, Regional Planning Organization, and Town levels, Nov. 1, 2012, edition*. Retrieved from <http://ctsdc.uconn.edu/projections.html>.

The current status of the cemeteries suggests that future capacity among Town-owned cemeteries will be soon exhausted. Cemetery operation and maintenance represent significant yearly expenses for East Hartford. Considering current budget constraints and the high cost of acquiring land, the Town should consider ceasing to expand cemetery capacity in the future, focusing instead on maintenance of existing plots.

### **6.3 Summary of Recommendations**

The Town of East Hartford provides a wealth of services for its residents in facilities located throughout the town. These facilities have a long-standing history in the community and serve as neighborhood institutions. Yet many may have been constructed to serve a much different, and larger population than exists today. Given these changes and current budget constraints, it will be crucial for the Town to be strategic about expansions or upgrades to community facilities, to ensure that they are undertaken in the most effective and cost-efficient manner and achieve the most “bang for the buck.”

In that context, the following items were identified during this planning process as specific areas of focus for the Town to consider:

- Coordinate with the MDC on necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate future growth in East Hartford.
- Continue to monitor the dike system along the Connecticut River, and fund additional improvements as necessary to retain certification from the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Proceed with renovations for fire stations #1 and #2 and complete other station and equipment upgrades, as necessary and based on available funding, with current technology.
- Complete renovations to the Raymond Library and monitor the needs of the other branches, including the potential for cost-saving strategies through cooperation with surrounding municipalities.
- Continue to improve waste disposal and recycling programs, using the latest applicable best practices.
- Evaluate the need for a new Department of Public Safety complex, based on an assessment of the cost of a new facility against the department’s needs and the future maintenance costs of existing facilities.
- Undertake improvements to senior citizen facilities in accordance with identified needs.
- Consider ending future acquisition of additional cemetery space and focus instead on maintenance of existing plots.

## **7.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **7.1 Introduction**

As part of the community outreach process, one of the issues cited was the erosion of East Hartford's history, with comments including concern over the loss of historic buildings and neighborhood fabric. The need to maintain the Town's older housing stock was also an issue of concern, especially along commercial corridors such as Main Street. In some areas of town, the older housing stock is in need of rehabilitation and on-going maintenance. Allowing older buildings to fall into disrepair and in severe cases allowing buildings to become so deteriorated that they require demolition affects the fabric and character of the Town's older neighborhoods.

The desire to maintain and preserve a link to the Town's agricultural heritage through the preservation of agricultural land is addressed in this Plan in the Open Space chapter, while the need to maintain the Town's older housing stock is addressed in the Housing chapter. Preservation of East Hartford's historic and cultural heritage as part of future planning and development efforts benefits the Town in several ways: preserving and enhancing community character; improving community image; and aiding in economic development efforts, especially when promoting or marketing the town's unique qualities and characteristics.

### **7.2 Historic Districts and Sites**

There are four National Register of Historic Places in East Hartford: the Garvan-Carroll Historic District; the Central Avenue-Center Cemetery Historic District; the Downtown Main Street Historic District; and the Naubuc Avenue-Broad Street Historic District. There is also a Local Historic District known as the Naubuc District which includes a portion of Naubuc Avenue and a few structures on Broad Street. These districts are shown in Figure 14.

While both National Register historic districts and local historic districts are listed on the State Register of Historic Places, they differ in structure and the reviews required. A National Register district is established through the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service as formal recognition of an area with historical, architectural or cultural significance. Property alterations only require review if there is State or Federal involvement.

A local historic district offers greater protection and involvement from the community. Within these districts, property owners must obtain a "Certificate of Appropriateness" from the Historic District Commission before making visible changes to the exterior of their property. Under Connecticut statutes, any interested group of residents may ask a municipal government to appoint a committee to study the possibility for a local historic district and to prepare a report of the historically and architecturally significant properties in the proposed district. The report is submitted to the municipal planning and zoning commission and the State Historic Preservation Office for comment, and a public hearing is scheduled. A local district cannot be established without a referendum of property owners. Two-thirds of the property owners within the proposed

district must support the designation or it is not permitted. If the referendum is passed, it must go on to the municipal government for approval.

In addition to these districts, the Town has several individual sites listed on the National Register:



First Congregational Church (837 Main Street)



St. John's Episcopal Church (1160 Main Street)



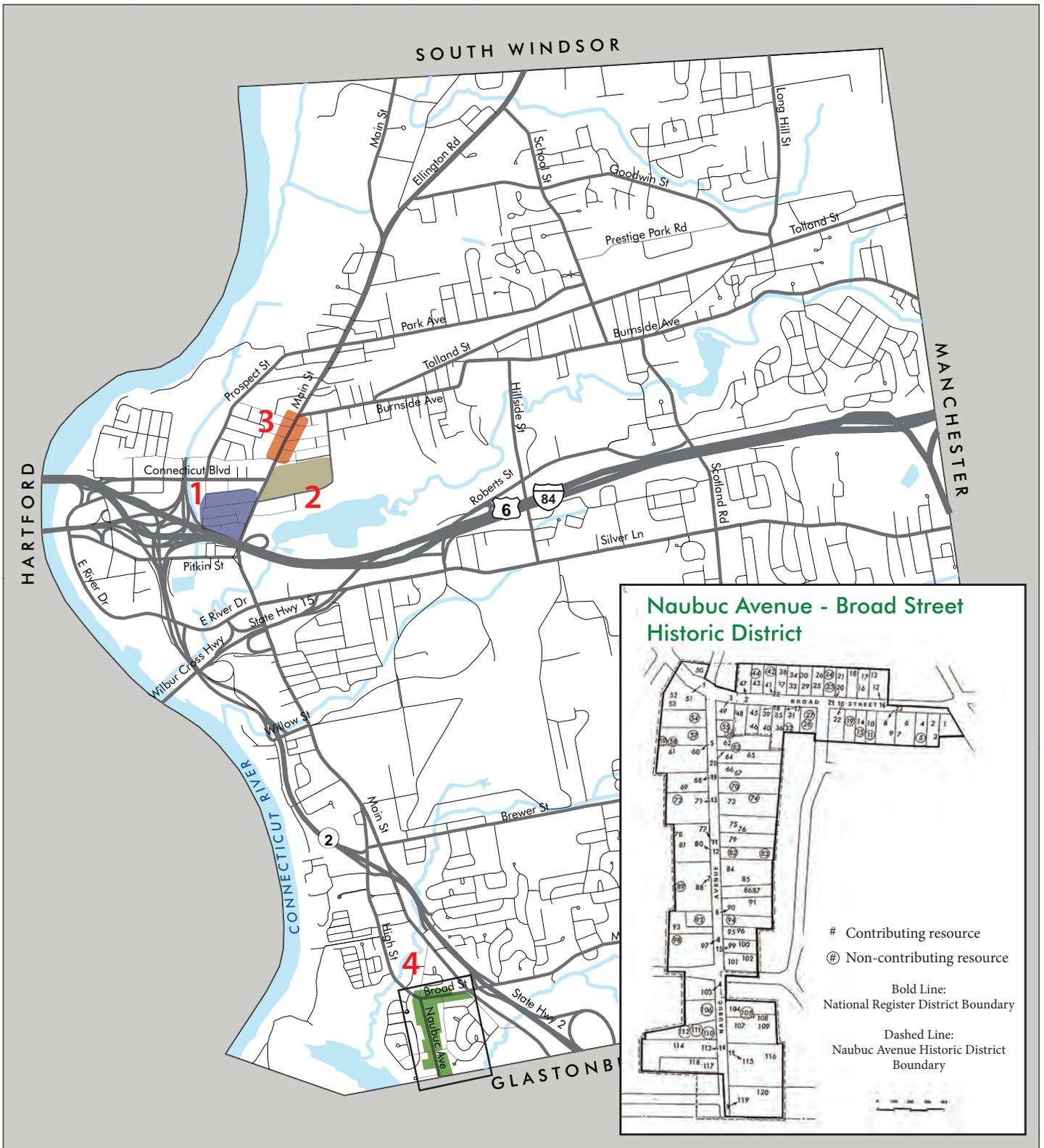
Brewer House (165 Main Street)  
Source: East Hartford Historical Society



Bemont, Makens, House (307 Burnside Avenue)



Gilman-Hayden House (1871 Main Street)  
Source: waymarking.com



### Historic Districts

- 1. The Garvan-Carroll Historic District\*
- 2. The Central Avenue-Center Cemetery Historic District\*
- 3. The Downtown Main Street Historic District\*
- 4. The Naubuc Avenue-Broad Street Historic District

\* Approximate boundary

The Town has over 1,100 structures inventories and recorded with the State of Connecticut through a "Historic Resources Inventory." East Hartford's Grants Administration Office serves as its historic inventory clearinghouse, having on staff the Town's Municipal Historic Preservation Officer and liaison to the Historic District Commission. The Town inventory of historic structures has been entered into a GIS database. To avoid losing additional Town history, this inventory of historic resources should be consulted as part of future development and redevelopment efforts in order to identify potential impacts on such resources and the potential for preservation or need for mitigating actions.

The 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development recommended that the Town consider seeking National Register designation for a district called "The Mills at Burnside." The district would encompass operating mills along the Hockanum River along portions of Church Street and Forbes Street. This district has not yet been designated, but remains an opportunity to link the architecture, history and archaeology of the mills with the Hockanum River Linear Park. Such a link could combine local history with recreational opportunities. The current extension plans for the linear park, discussed further in Chapter 5, will greatly enhance the visibility and accessibility of these mills, making a linkage between the Town's historic and recreational uses all the more compelling.

## 8.0 HOUSING

### 8.1 Introduction

As one of the principal land uses within a community, housing and housing-related issues affect all residents. The form, layout, condition and cost of housing available are key determinants in residents' quality of life. The General Statutes for the State of Connecticut Section 8-23, which set the standards for a municipal Plan of Conservation and Development read, "Such plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity. Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate-income households."

#### HOUSING GOALS:

*Focus on enhancing and preserving its neighborhoods*

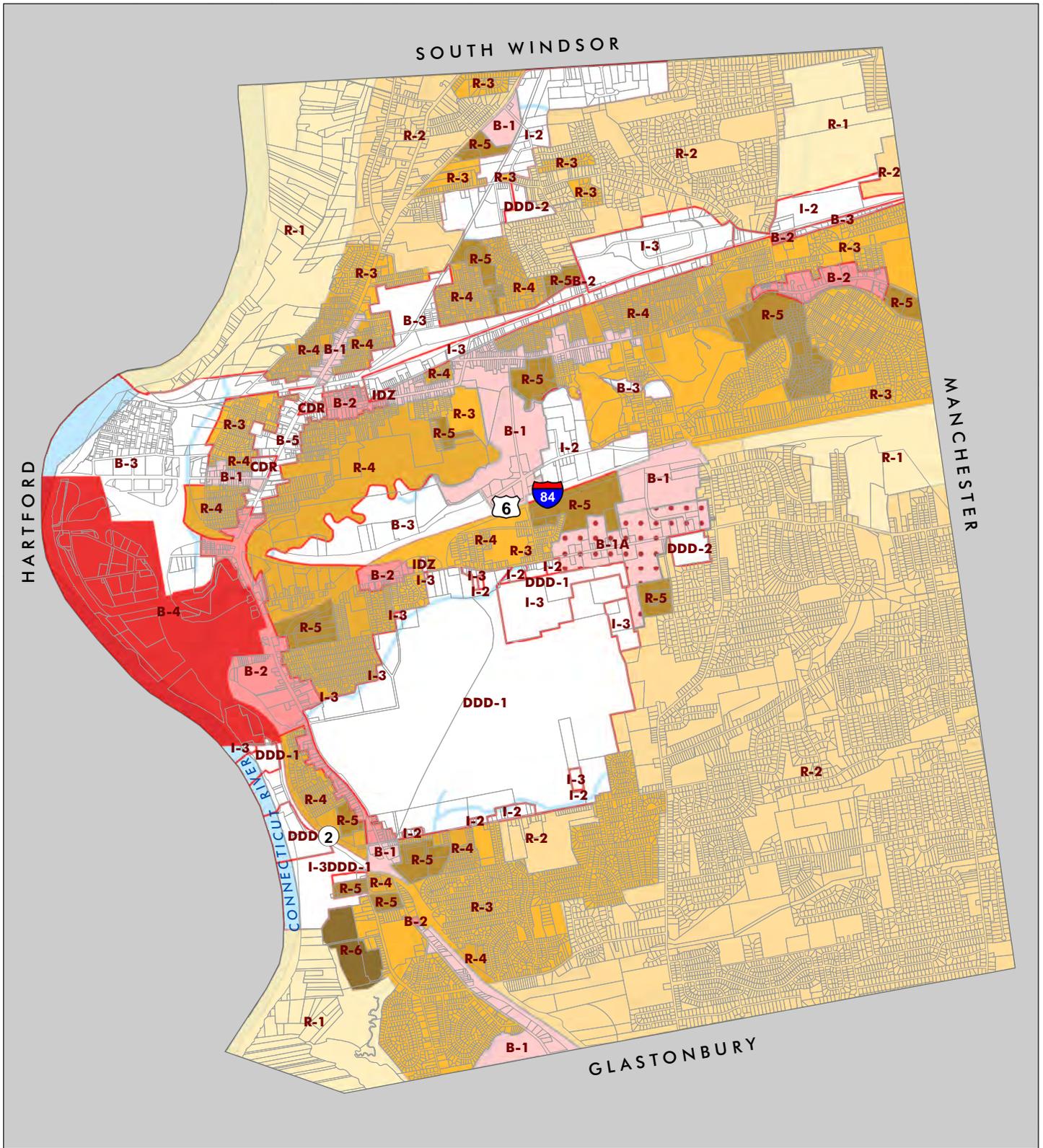
*Provide opportunities for the development of a diverse range of new housing, including market-rate as well as affordable, that meets the needs of people at various stages in their life.*

*Increase the percentage of owner occupied housing within the Town and support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes.*

### 8.2 Existing Conditions

Zones that allow for residential use are illustrated on Figure 15. The oldest and most dense housing in East Hartford is concentrated in the neighborhoods along Main Street and Burnside Avenue in R-4 and business zones; much of the town's multifamily housing is in these areas. Housing in the southwestern section of the town, immediately south of Rentschler Field, is zoned R-3 and includes mostly small individual lots set in compact neighborhoods. A large mobile home park is also found in this general area. Most of the housing in East Hartford consists of single-family detached homes sited on medium-sized lots. This housing, developed after World War II, is primarily zoned R-2 and concentrated in the southeast section of the Town.

Single-family homes in established R-2 and R-3 zoned neighborhoods represent the majority of East Hartford's housing stock. These neighborhoods are characterized by well-maintained homes, and many contain schools and parks and are close to shopping and major employment centers. This housing is supported by full municipal infrastructure including water and sewer and an ample network of sidewalks, making East Hartford a "walkable" town. In sum, East Hartford's neighborhoods lend themselves to a convenient quality of life for its residents.



**Zoning Districts**

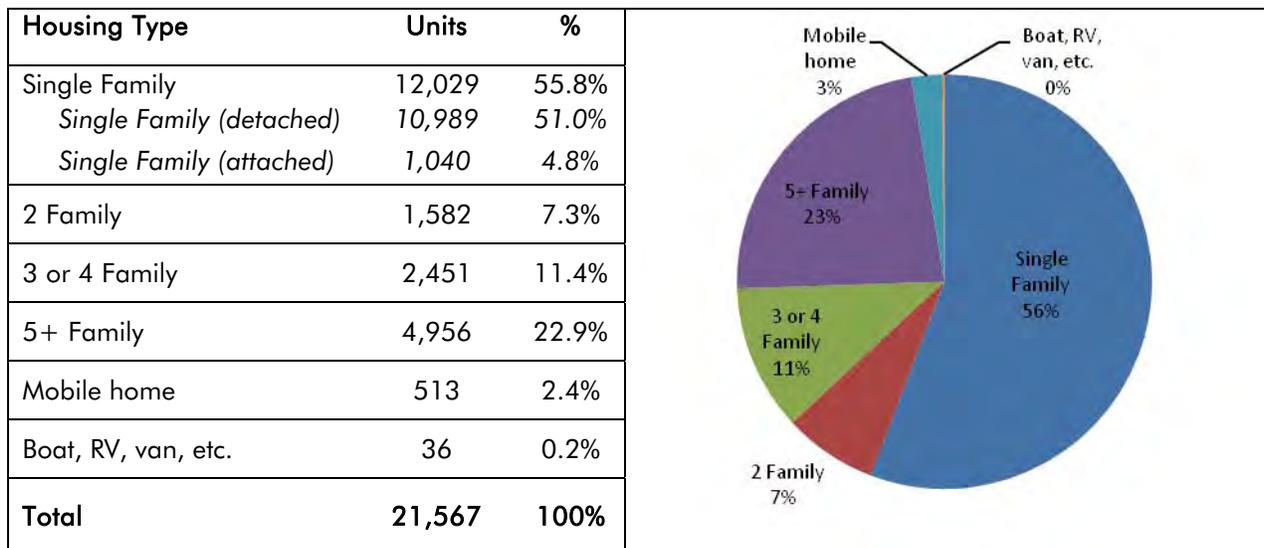
- |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                    |                  |                  |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Residence 1 (R-1) | Residence 2 (R-2) | Residence 3 (R-3) | Residence 4 (R-4) | Residence 5 (R-5) | Residence 6 (R-6) | Business 1 (B-1) | Business 1A (B-1A) | Business 2 (B-2) | Business 4 (B-4) | Not Zoned for Residential Use |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|

The housing component of the 2003 Plan of Development focused on existing housing conditions and the need to encourage neighborhood and historic preservation within the town. The plan suggested that increased code enforcement and a revolving loan program to assist owners in maintaining their property would greatly increase the quality of the housing stock and preserve the fabric of neighborhoods. The Plan also noted historic districts and Town landmarks that were eligible for historic designation. These recommendations remain valid today.

### 8.3 Existing Housing Stock

East Hartford’s housing stock of 21,000+ units consists of 56% single-family housing; 23% multifamily housing (5 units or more); 18% two-, three- and four-family units; and the remaining 2% mobile homes (see Chart 6). This housing stock is relatively dense when compared with outlying towns in the Hartford metropolitan area. However, the number of units and ratio of single- to multifamily housing is similar to other inner-ring neighboring communities such as Manchester, which as 22,000+ housing units, 57% of which are single-family and 23% of which are multifamily.

**Chart 6: East Hartford Housing by Type**



Housing Units	Units	%
Occupied	20,246	93.9%
Vacant	1,321	6.1%
Total Units	21,567	100%

Occupied Housing Units	Units	%
Owner-Occupied	11,523	56.9%
Renter-Occupied	8,723	43.1%
Total Occupied Units	20,246	100%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimate

### Occupied Housing Units

According to the Census Bureau, East Hartford had 21,328 housing units in 2010, virtually unchanged since the 2000 Census. Some 95% of the housing units were occupied, leaving a 5% vacancy rate (1,133 units). Of the total 20,195 occupied housing units 58.5% (11,813) were owner-occupied, and the remaining 41.5% (8,382) were renter-occupied. Almost half of the 1,133 vacant housing units were rental units, 547 or 48.2%. Between the two census periods, the number of owner households within the town grew slightly (187 units), while the number of renter households declined (198 units).

The majority of East Hartford’s housing stock (57%) was built after World War II, from 1940 through the 1960s. Housing production leveled off in the 1970s and was significantly reduced during the 1980s and 1990s.

**Table 11: East Hartford Housing Units by Year Constructed**

<b>Year Constructed</b>	<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Before 1940</b>	3,919	18.2%
<b>1940 - 1949</b>	2,618	12.1%
<b>1950 - 1959</b>	5,108	23.7%
<b>1960 - 1969</b>	4,564	21.2%
<b>1970 - 1979</b>	2,479	11.5%
<b>1980 - 1989</b>	1,820	8.4%
<b>1990 - 1999</b>	637	3.0%
<b>2000 - 2004</b>	219	1.0%
<b>After 2004</b>	203	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,567</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimate

Age of housing stock affects the overall aesthetic appeal of much of East Hartford’s housing, given that 75.2% of its housing is more than 40 years old. There has been very little residential construction in recent years; only 5% of the town’s homes were built after 1990. However, most of East Hartford’s housing is in sound condition. According to the Census, only 2.4% of the town’s overall housing stock is in substandard condition, and most of these units are suitable for rehabilitation. A strategy of on-going preservation and rehabilitation needs to be encouraged and promoted in East Hartford’s older neighborhoods, to ensure that the town’s housing remains attractive and is consistent with modern standards.

### 8.4 Housing Development Activity

As shown in Table 12: Authorized Residential Building Permits, since 2008, East Hartford authorized 62 building permits, all of which were single-family homes. In fact, since the last Plan of Conservation and Development update, only single-family homes have been built.

**Table 12: Authorized Residential Building Permits**

	East Hartford		South Windsor		Manchester		Glastonbury	
	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units
<b>2008</b>	11	11	35	105	22	22	40	40
<b>2009</b>	31	31	20	20	10	10	27	27
<b>2010</b>	7	7	17	17	21	21	48	48
<b>2011</b>	2	2	14	14	13	13	38	38
<b>2012</b>	11	11	15	15	17	17	40	40
<b>2008-2012</b>	62	62	101	171	83	83	193	193

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The number of housing units authorized by East Hartford between 2008 and 2012 was considerably lower than the number of new units gained by the neighborhood suburban communities of South Windsor (171 units) and Glastonbury (193 units). South Windsor was the only Town that permitted multifamily development (88 units in 8 buildings) over that period. Development in East Hartford was somewhat less than Manchester (83 units), which has an existing housing stock that is of comparable age and tenure to that of East Hartford. However, Manchester still has a significant amount of available land upon which to build. The most significant development opportunity in East Hartford exists at Rentschler Field, which is zoned as a Design Development District, a mixed-use zone. The site’s location at the center of town, with excellent highway access and proximity to shopping and residential neighborhoods could make it attractive for some residential component of its overall development. However, the redevelopment plans currently under consideration devote the majority of the site for non-residential use. The remainder of East Hartford is closer to being completely built out. Development in these areas is likely to be infill development on one of the several vacant or underutilized parcels scattered throughout the town or a redevelopment project. The town should consider developing guidelines that promote infill residential development in a manner consistent with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.

## 8.5 Residential Development Potential

New residential development typically occurs either by the development of vacant land through subdivision or redevelopment through infill development. It is difficult to assess the capacity of infill development due to difficulty in identifying precisely where it would occur and how much of a parcel it could occupy. However, it is possible to assess the potential of new residential development on vacant land. The greatest number of new dwelling units can be expected in zones where vacant land is still available for subdivision.

As described earlier in the Land Use section of this Plan, under current zoning, the residential zones in East Hartford (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6) comprise approximately 8,200 acres or 68%

of the Town's total land area. The business zones that allow residential development (B-1, B-2, B-4,) account for an additional 1,140 acres or 10% of the Town. Because most of the Town has been developed, not all of the residential zones have undeveloped (vacant) land that can accommodate new development. In fact, of all the residential zones listed above, only the R-2 and R-3 zones have a considerable number of vacant parcels that have the potential to contribute new dwelling units. Vacant or underutilized parcels account for 13% of all the land zoned for residential use.

The previous plan's residential development potential analysis showed the potential for approximately 900 additional dwelling units within the town's residential zones under current zoning. Between 2003 and 2012, 214 single family building permits were issued in East Hartford. Assuming that these permits resulted in built houses, this leaves the potential for approximately 686 dwelling units in the R-2 and R-3 zones under the existing zoning. Due to the many variables involved in land development, these residential build-out numbers are speculative. Regulatory changes could place more or less restriction on the buildable area of a parcel. In addition, overlay zones to protect a specific resource such as aquifer protection regulations could be established which affect land development; existing municipal facilities could be expanded; or land can be purchased or set aside for open space.

Because of the limited potential for new growth through subdivision, it should be expected that infill development would have an increasing role in the future housing stock in the Town. Infill development occurs on vacant or underutilized parcels within existing areas that are already largely developed. Many older communities, like East Hartford, have vacant or underutilized parcels that have, for one reason or another, been overlooked during the course of urbanization. Successful infill development projects focus on filling in the gaps with a mix of housing types as well as other land uses at densities and design standards that are consistent with the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods.

In 2010, the Town released *East Hartford Community Profile, Housing for Economic Growth Study*, prepared by BBP & Associates, LLC. According to the housing data analysis, there is demand in East Hartford for market-rate housing for young professionals and families who work in the Metro Hartford Region. East Hartford is ideally suited to take advantage of the growing need for workforce housing as infill near the town's major employment centers and traditional retail areas. The report identified a number of potential areas in East Hartford for infill and mixed use development, including:

- Downtown: Vacant buildings on Main Street and vacant five acre site on Burnside Avenue.
- Silver Lane: Underutilized shopping centers offer potential for mixed use development.
- Goodwin College: New development and/or rehabilitation of existing housing proximate to River Campus.

The study recommended the State's Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) program as a tool to achieve the Town's economic development goals which include revitalizing Main Street, restoring the

historic character of downtown, emphasizing redevelopment and improving traffic patterns for pedestrians. The IHZs encourage affordable and mixed-use housing. Since much of the housing stock in East Hartford is already considered affordable for its residents, the Town could utilize the program to create market-rate housing for the Town that is affordable to the region.

Grants and other funds are available to municipalities that adopt IHZ programs. To receive funding through the program, an approved IHZ zone can apply to residential or mixed-use development that meets the density threshold of 6 single-family homes per acre, 10 house or duplex units per acre or 20 multifamily units per acre. The IHZ zone must also increase density allowances of the underlying zone by at least 25%. The table below shows that the existing density allowances in the some of the Town’s zoning districts do not support the density requirements of the IHZ program, even with the 25% density increase. Only the B-4 and B-1A (senior citizen housing only) districts meet the density requirements for multifamily housing.

**Table 13: Zoning Assessment of Incentive Development Zone (IHZ) Conformance**

Zoning District	Single-Family	Townhouse	Multifamily	Comments
R-1	-	-	-	
R-2	-	-	-	
R-3	-	-	-	
R-4	Yes	Yes	-	
R-5	Yes	Yes	-	Does not meet IHZ density requirement for multifamily
R-6	Yes	-	-	Does not meet IHZ density requirement for townhouse/duplex units
B-1A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Housing allowed for senior citizens; by special permit only
B-1	Yes	Yes	-	Does not meet IHZ density requirement for multifamily
B-2	Yes	Yes	-	Does not meet IHZ density requirement for multifamily
B-3	-	-	-	
B-4	-	-	Yes	Special Permit only
B-5	-	-	-	
I-1, I-2 & I-3	-	-	-	

There are some areas where infill development should be fostered; however the IHZ program cannot be used because the underlying zoning’s allowable residential uses or densities do not meet IHZ requirements. In these cases, the Town should consider creating a higher-density IHZ overlay zone. Design guidelines could be attached to the overlay zone to ensure that new development is well-planned, context-sensitive and visually appealing. Some candidates for an IHZ overlay zone include Main Street from Burnside Avenue to Tolland Street and Burnside Avenue (specifically the 30-acre vacant side at 550 Burnside Avenue). Recommendations on housing type, maximum build-out and specific locations for the overlay zones are detailed in the 2010 study. The recommendations are under consideration but have not yet been implemented.

## 8.6 Affordability of Housing

### Demand for Affordable Housing

Affordability of Housing is defined in many ways. The most-used affordability definitions are derived from the HUD Area Median Income (AMI) limits for qualification for housing subsidies at levels ranging from 30% (extremely low) to 120% (moderate) of area median income. According to HUD, the AMI for the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford area, the most localized area for which the AMI is determined, is \$85,500. The income limits are based on the assumption of a family of four, as further adjusted by number of household members to meet more specific program protocols, i.e., the amount is adjusted by number of household members based on the concept that the more people need to be supported, the higher the income needs to be. The table that follows shows the programmatic income limits by household size with the general income level – that of a family of four – highlighted.

**Table 14: Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford MSA 2013 Median Income Limits for Section 8 and the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

	Household Size							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
30% of AMI	\$18,00	\$20,55	\$23,10	\$25,650	\$27,750	\$29,800	\$31,850	\$33,900
50% of AMI	\$29,95	\$34,20	\$38,50	\$42,750	\$46,200	\$49,600	\$53,050	\$56,450
60% of AMI*	\$36,00	\$41,10	\$46,20	\$51,300	\$55,500	\$59,600	\$63,700	\$67,800
80% of AMI	\$45,10	\$51,55	\$58,00	\$64,400	\$69,600	\$74,750	\$79,900	\$85,050
100% of	\$59,90	\$68,40	\$77,00	\$85,500	\$92,400	\$99,200	\$106,10	\$112,90
120% of	\$72,00	\$82,20	\$92,40	\$102,60	\$111,00	\$119,20	\$127,40	\$135,60

Source: HUDuser.org, 2013 Median Income Limits for the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program \*Urbanomics derived.

In the table below, the detailed 2007-2011 ACS estimates of household income have been aggregated to correspond as closely as possible to the 2013 HUD programmatic income limits. Based on these estimates, eight out of every 10 households (82.3%) in East Hartford would qualify for subsidized housing of some type.

**Table 15: 2011 East Hartford Households by Income**

	Households	Percent of Total
Less than \$25,000	5,119	25.3%
\$25,000 to \$39,999	3,123	15.4%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	1,945	9.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	6,468	31.9%
\$100,000 or more	3,591	17.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B19001

Fully half of all households in East Hartford have incomes of less than \$50,000, qualifying them for low-income program status at 60% of AMI. Half of these, or more than one in four (25.3%),

have incomes of less than \$25,000 and are thus at less than 30% of AMI. One in three households have incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – qualifying them for “Workforce Housing.” Only 17.7% of local households have incomes of greater than 120% of AMI.

Given the relatively low incomes of East Hartford, affordable housing is obviously a need; the next section will determine the extent to which the need is being met.

### **Affordability Need**

Housing is considered “affordable” if less than 30% of household income is being spent on housing costs regardless of tenure. As shown in the table below, more than 41% of East Hartford households were expending 30% or more of their income on housing costs in 2011, according to the ACS.

**Table 16: 2011 East Hartford Households Spending 30% or More on Housing by Tenure**

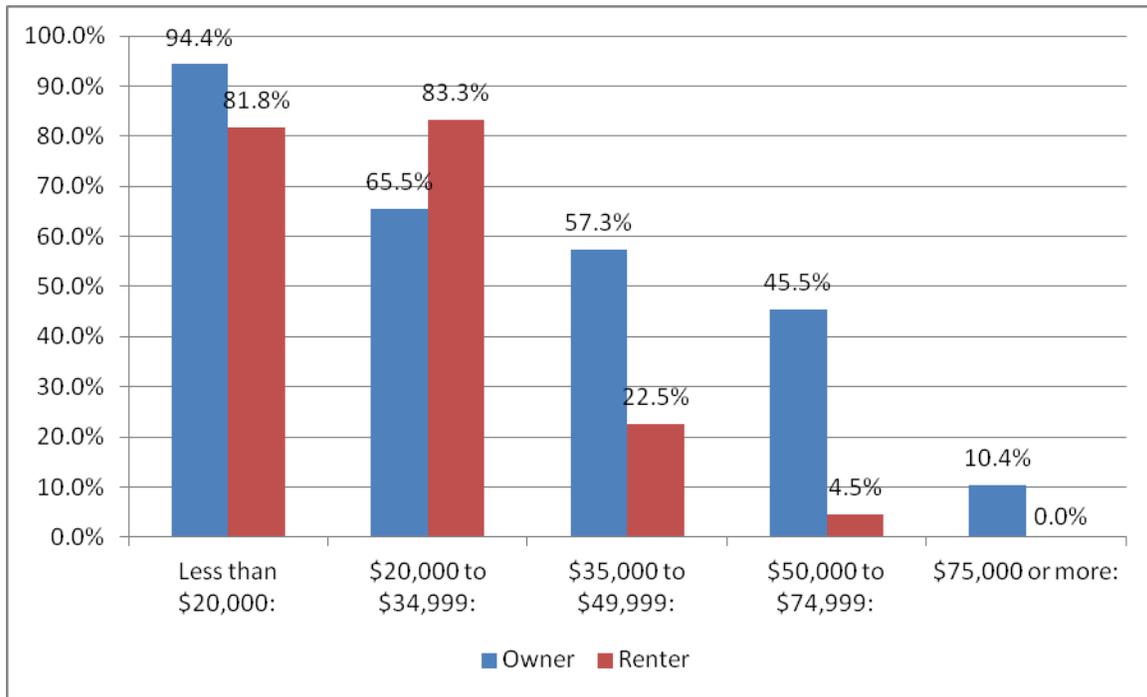
	<b>Total Households</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Renter</b>
Total	20,246	11,523	8,723
More than 30%	8,347	4,457	3,890
Unaffordable Share	41.2%	38.7%	44.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B25106

The share of households with unaffordable housing was higher for renters (44.6 %) and lower for owners (38.7%). The portion of owners and renters living in housing beyond the official affordability level varies with income as well. As expected, households with low incomes are more likely to be paying more than 30% of that amount on a mortgage or rent.

However, it is very interesting that, with the exception of households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000, East Hartford owners are more like than renters in the same income cohort to be in housing that is not affordable. It is possible that this is a reflection of the housing bubble that was still very much in effect during the five-year data collection period – which placed many homeowners “underwater,” owing more than their houses were worth – as well as a lack of higher end rental housing.

**Chart 7: 2011 East Hartford Households Spending 30%+ on Housing by Income & Tenure**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B25106

### Subsidized Housing

East Hartford is exempt from further publicly assisted affordable housing construction, according to the 2012 Affordable Housing Appeals List, with 16.5% of stock consisting of affordable housing units or 3,509 of 21,328 units. This master list is drawn from many different Federal, State and local programs, run by agencies and non-profits. The following section provides additional detail on the share of these units that are managed by the East Hartford Public Housing Authority, and/or are part of Federal rental and mortgage assistance programs. It should be noted that these lists are not mutually exclusive.

According to the that list, there are 1,577 governmentally assisted units in East Hartford including 851 units run by the East Hartford Public Housing Authority. These include both Family and Elderly/Disabled units under both Federal and State programs, as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 17: East Hartford Public Housing Authority Units by Program Type**

	Federal	State	Total
Family	100	230	330
Elderly/Disabled	491	30	521
Total	591	260	851

Source: East Hartford Public Housing Authority

It should be noted that the buildings are quite old, having been constructed between 1952 and 1976, with a median age of 50. In fact, one of the State moderate-income housing projects, King Court, consisting of 34 buildings and 80 units, recently sold to private ownership, in part because of lack of funding to provide capital maintenance and improvements.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, there is tenant assistance for 1,024 units in the form of Housing Choice vouchers<sup>10</sup> and Section-8<sup>11</sup> rental units. Of the latter, four are currently available at rents ranging from \$650 to \$1,226. There are also 908 CHFA/USDA Mortgages in the municipality.

A number of affordable units may also be available at any given time in the private market in East Hartford. Based on compiled gross rents from the 2007-2011 ACS, as compared with the April 2012 HUD Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for the town, a total estimate of units below FMR can be determined. Subtracting the number of publicly assisted units and applying the town's rental vacancy rate yields an estimated 220 below-market rental units available in the private market. However, it should be noted that this calculation represents a moment in time; rents can be expected to fluctuate based on overall market conditions and local supply and demand.

## 8.7 Elderly and Multifamily Housing

The existence of different types of housing (rental or owned) in different types of structures (single-family or multifamily) enables different types of households, from singles to families to seniors, at different income levels, to have viable housing options in a community.

### *Elderly*

As shown in Chart 8 below, fully one in five households in East Hartford (21.4%) is held by someone age 65 or older, slightly less than the overall Hartford County share of 23% and almost five percentage points greater than Hartford at 16.8%.

Table 18 shows the Elderly share of households by tenure and structure type. The majority of elderly householders (76.1%) own their own homes, and the vast majority of these, 2,953 or 89.5 percent are single family attached or detached units.

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<sup>9</sup> Assumptions regarding reasons for sale are drawn from the King Court RFQ, issued on February 8, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> The federal Housing Choice Voucher program assists very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled in affording decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Participants may choose any housing type that meets the program requirements and are not limited to units in subsidized housing projects. Vouchers are administered by local public housing agencies (PHAs).

<sup>11</sup> The Section 8 Program provides rental subsidies for eligible tenant families (including single persons) residing in newly constructed, rehabilitated and existing rental and cooperative apartment projects. Rents of some of the residential units are subsidized by HUD under the Section 8 New Construction, Substantial Rehabilitation and/or Loan Management Set-Aside Programs. All such assistance is "project-based", i.e. the subsidy is committed by HUD for the assisted units of a particular Mortgaged Property for a contractually determined period.

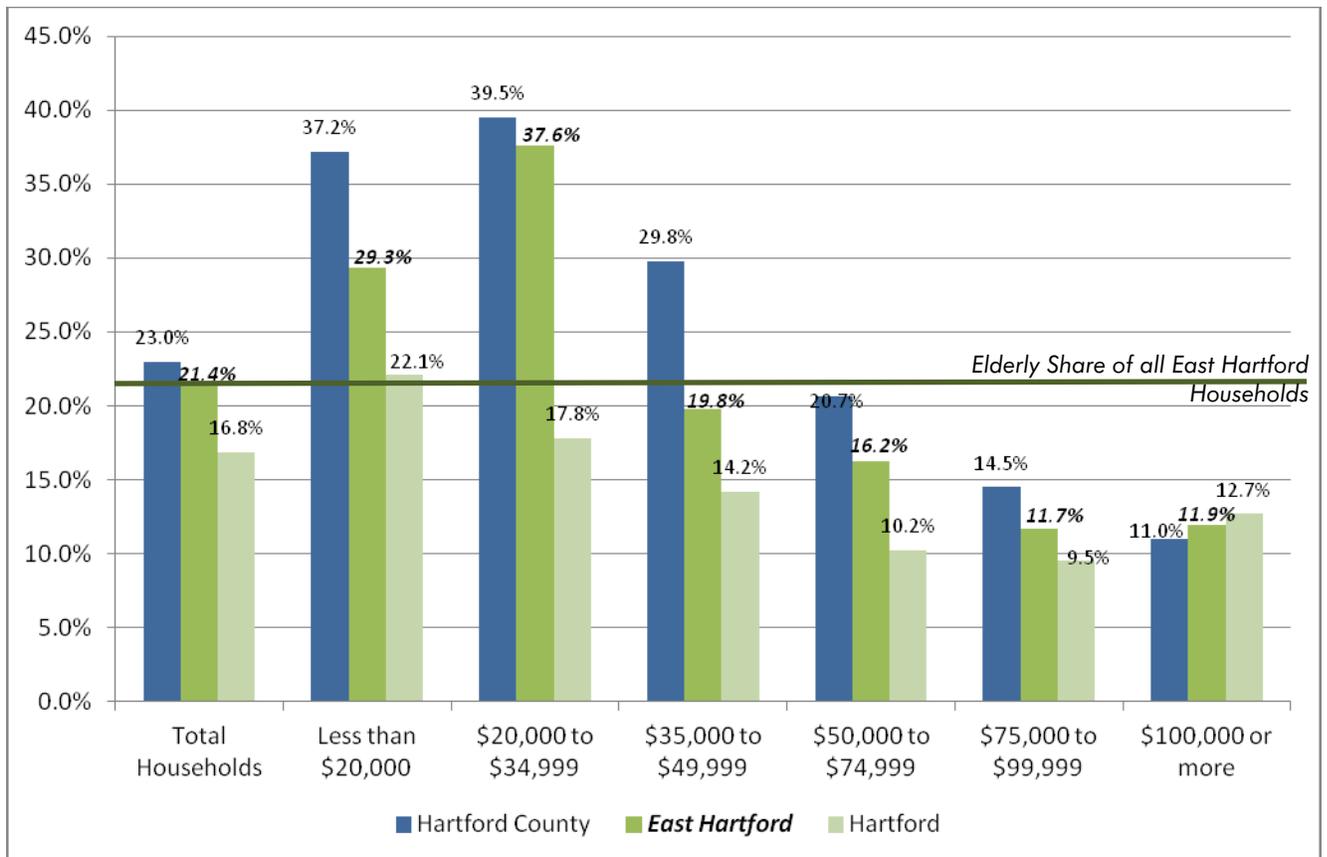
**Table 18: 2011 East Hartford Householders 65 and Older by Tenure and Structure Type**

	Total	Owner	Renter	Owner Share	Renter Share
All Households	20,246	11,523	8,723	56.9%	43.1%
Householder 65 years and over:	4,336	3,298	1,038	76.1%	23.9%
1, detached or attached	3,095	2,953	142	95.4%	4.6%
2 to 4	335	87	248	26.0%	74.0%
5 to 19	156	44	112	28.2%	71.8%
20 to 49	204	9	195	4.4%	95.6%
50 or more	390	63	327	16.2%	83.8%
Mobile home, boat, RV, van, etc.	156	142	14	91.0%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B25125

Multi-unit senior residences are more likely to be rentals, e.g., 74% of two- to four-unit structures, 71.8% of five- to 19-unit structures, 95.6% of 20- to 49-unit structures and 83.8% of structures with 50 or more units.

**Chart 8: Elderly Share of Total Households by Income: Hartford County, East Hartford and Hartford, 2011**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B19037

When looking at the elderly share of households by income level, it is only in the lowest categories, less than \$20,000 and \$20,000-\$34,999, that the share of elderly households in East Hartford exceeds the overall average, at 29.3% and 37.6%, respectively. This is not unusual, as many older householders are on fixed incomes, and indeed, the same pattern holds for Hartford County and the City of Hartford as well. It is notable that the differential at the lowest income levels is much greater for Hartford County (14.2 and 16.5 percentage points), and much less for the City of Hartford (5.3 and 1.0 percentage points), implying that elderly households in suburban municipalities are more likely than other cohorts to have low incomes. However, as shown in the table below, the elderly are less likely to be classified as impoverished.

In East Hartford, 14.8% of all households are below the poverty level<sup>12</sup> compared with 10.8% of Hartford County and 31.8% of the City of Hartford. More family households are classified as being in poverty than non-family households in East Hartford and Hartford, primarily due to the cost burden of children; whereas in Hartford County as a whole, more non-family households are in poverty – these are driven by households with heads 65 or older, i.e., seniors living alone.

**Table 19: 2011 East Hartford Households in Poverty by Age and Household Type**

	Hartford County	East Hartford	Hartford		Hartford County	East Hartford	Hartford
All Households	348,438	20,246	46,048		348,438	20,246	46,048
In Poverty	37,684	2,995	14,659		10.8%	14.8%	31.8%
Family Households	18,623	1,743	7,991		49.4%	58.2%	54.5%
Non Family Households	19,061	1,252	6,668		50.6%	41.8%	45.5%
At or Above Poverty Level	310,754	17,251	31,389		89.2%	85.2%	68.2%
All Households 65 or Older	79,995	4,336	7,756		79,995	4,336	7,756
In Poverty	7,719	481	2,192		9.6%	11.1%	28.3%
Family Households	1,365	152	526		17.7%	31.6%	24.0%
Non Family Households	6,354	329	1,666		82.3%	68.4%	76.0%
At or Above Poverty Level	72,276	3,855	5,564		90.4%	88.9%	71.7%
All Other Households	268,443	15,910	38,292		268,443	15,910	38,292
In Poverty	29,965	2,514	12,467		11.2%	15.8%	32.6%
Family Households	17,258	1,591	7,465		57.6%	63.3%	59.9%
Non Family Households	12,707	923	5,002		42.4%	36.7%	40.1%
At or Above Poverty Level	238,478	13,396	25,825		88.8%	84.2%	67.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B17017

<sup>12</sup> "Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty." US Census Bureau, American Factfinder Glossary

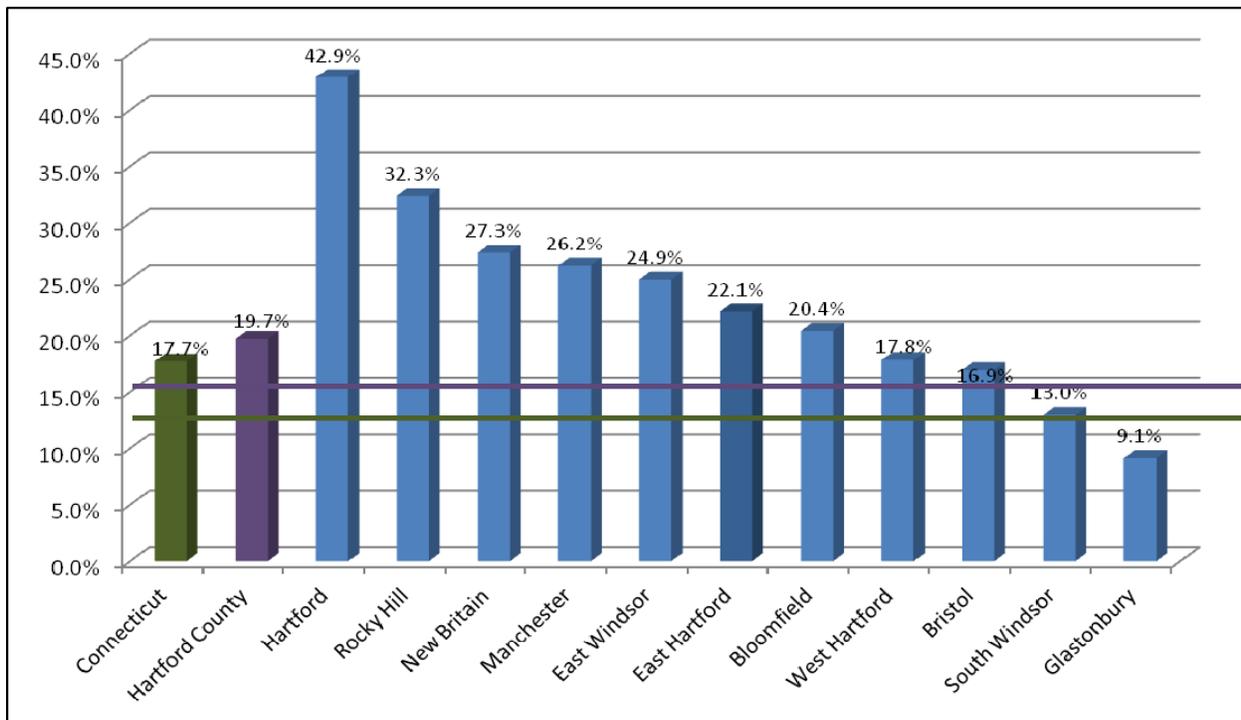
In East Hartford, 11.1% of households with heads 65 or older are in poverty. Of these, 68.4% (seven out of every 10) are non-family households or seniors living alone; however this is a smaller share than in the City of Hartford, or Hartford County as a whole (76.0% and 82.3%, respectively). When examining households with heads under the age of 64, the majority that are in poverty are family households: 63.3% in East Hartford, 59.9% in Hartford, and 57.6% in Hartford County.

**Multifamily**

As shown in the chart below, fewer than one in five (17.7%) units of Connecticut housing is in multiunit structures (defined as buildings with five or more units). Hartford County’s share of multiunit structures is two percentage points higher at 19.7%, largely driven up by the 42.9% share of multifamily units in the City of Hartford. East Hartford ranks sixth in Hartford County in share of housing units in multifamily structures at 22.1%, with Hartford, Rocky Hill, New Britain and Manchester all having larger multifamily shares.

In addition to multifamily units, East Hartford also has some 3,600 units (17.8% of all stock) in two- to four-unit buildings. At first look, this seems to indicate that East Hartford has sufficient housing choice, but the quality and price points of that housing are critical factors in the adequacy of housing choice.

**Chart 9: Multi-Family Housing Units as a Share of Total: Connecticut, Hartford County and Select Hartford Municipalities, 2011**



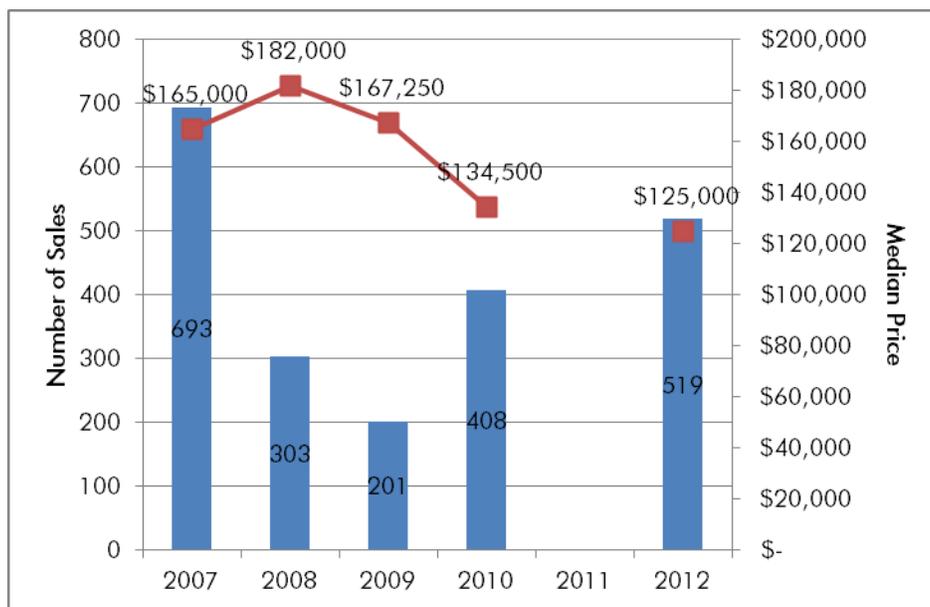
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table DP04

## 8.8 Housing Sales Activity

East Hartford has suffered from the same decline in housing sales activity as the rest of the country in the past five years; however, in terms of activity, this is improving. According to the Real Estate Sales Database of the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, in 2012, there were 519 housing units sold in East Hartford at a median price of \$125,000.

As illustrated in the chart below, the number of units sold is the highest it has been in five years; however the median price is 31.3% lower than it was at its peak in 2008.

**Chart 10: East Hartford Home Sales and Median Price, 2007-2010, 2012\*\***



Source: CT OPM Real Estate Transactions Database

\*\*Data for 2011 were not available.

## 8.9 Housing Issues/Gaps

A healthy housing market is determined to a large extent by the balance of housing options – single-family and multifamily; market-rate, workforce and affordable. There is a sufficient amount of subsidized housing in East Hartford at this point. However, as shown in previous sections, elderly householders are likely to own their own homes; yet the number of these with lower, likely fixed, incomes is significant. The Town should support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes. Programs should be targeted toward the elderly who comprise 78% of the Town’s low-income homeowners. Alternative housing options should be explored for seniors to encourage their continued residence in the Town.

It is notable that East Hartford has a lower ownership rate than the surrounding municipalities. The Town should develop and/or support programs that assist renters to become first-time home

buyers. In addition, supporting the diversification of owner-occupied stock in appropriate areas will improve the ownership ratio.

The housing issue of greater concern is the still-declining sales price of homes, which could be buoyed by the development of higher-end options in appropriate locations in order to attract and retain higher income residents. It is noted in the economic development section that there is a relatively large share of higher paying jobs in East Hartford; however these jobs are not held by East Hartford residents. It is likely that upwardly mobile younger residents and new employees are unable to find housing appropriate to their rising income levels or smaller household size, thus being forced to look elsewhere instead of keeping their income in East Hartford.

## 9.0 TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

### GOALS:

*East Hartford should maintain an efficient transportation system which meets the needs of community residents, while respecting existing land use and development patterns. The Town should maximize use of the existing road network to support employment centers and work to improve the aesthetics of its highways and commercial streets.*

*Provide general roadway improvements and implement transportation strategies as development and reinvestment of existing properties occurs. Such improvements should serve to mitigate and calm traffic flow; improve traffic circulation, parking, vehicular and pedestrian safety; and encourage multi-modal transportation.*

*Provide financially viable improvements that encourage economic and physical revitalization, especially those projects with clear funding sources.*

### 9.1 Introduction

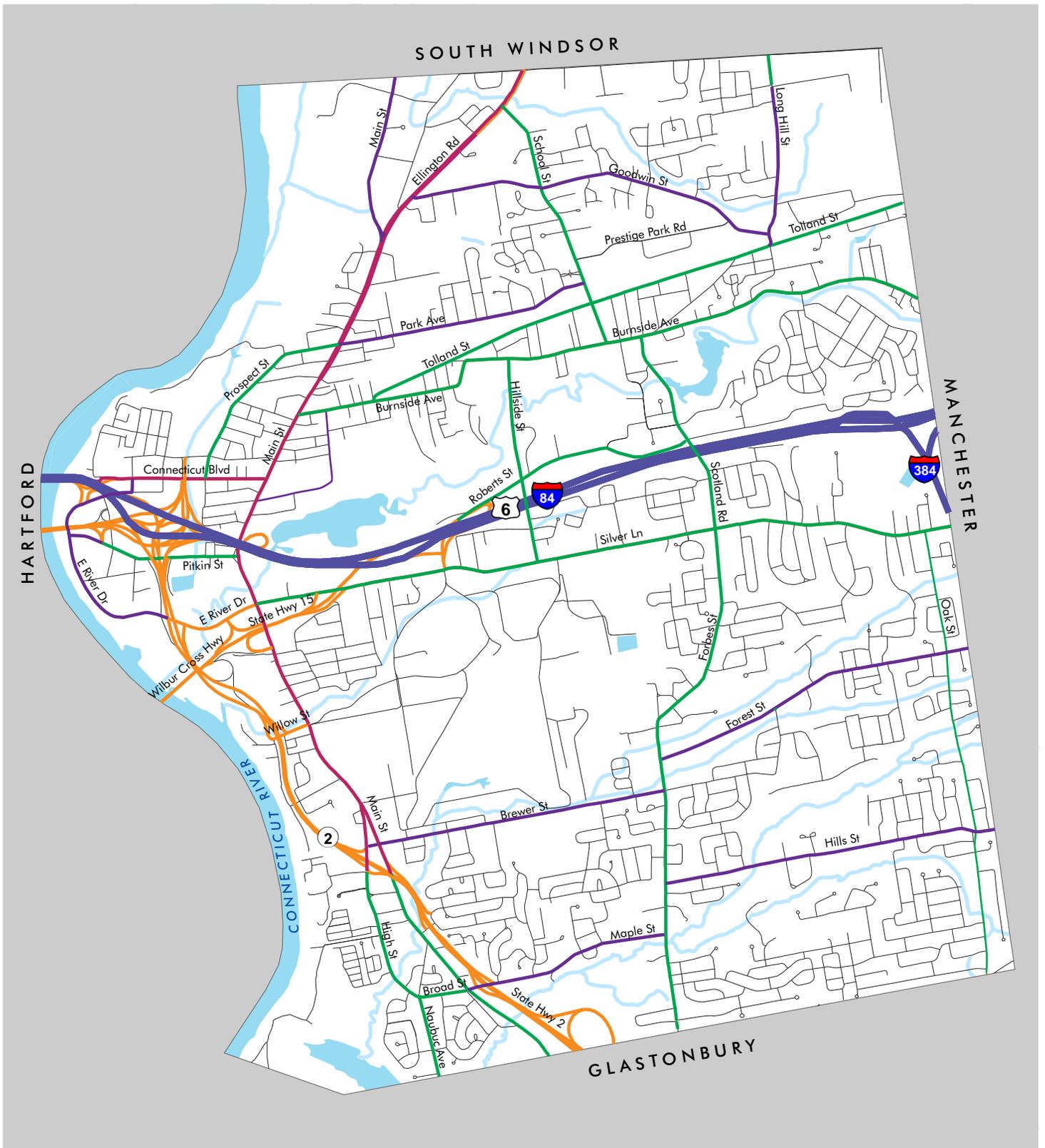
One of East Hartford's strengths is its location, within the Capitol region, providing proximity to Hartford and accessibility to the interstate network. To ensure that the town can continue to grow and prosper, it is essential that a safe, efficient and economically viable transportation system be provided. This system – comprised of a surface transportation network of streets and highways, walkways, linear parks, bikeways and mass transit – must provide for both inter-town and intra-town travel, for both residents and visitors to the Town. This chapter describes the existing conditions of the roadway network and how it can be improved to provide for future growth and development as envisioned in this Plan of Conservation and Development.

### 9.2 Existing Conditions

The roadway geometry within East Hartford has been dictated by its close relationship to Hartford, Interstate 84, Route 2 and Route 5/15. The roadway system is comprised of a series of corridors with varying levels of roadway classifications.

#### **Roadway Network**

Within East Hartford, there are five levels of roadway classifications: Principal Arterial (Interstate, Expressway), Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Collector and Local Road. Roadways are classified based on traffic volumes, accessibility and function. Additionally, each classification is tied into various Federal, State, regional and local funding programs and sources. In some cases, a road's actual classification may change along its length or operate differently than its functional classification. Street classifications are shown on Figure 16 and described briefly below.



**Legend**

Interstate Highway	Minor Arterial
Other Expressway/Interchange	Collector
Principal Arterial	Local

**Principal Arterials (Interstates and Expressways)** provide limited-access, multi-lane, high volume, high-capacity facilities intended to provide for high-speed, long travel distances with relatively few points of access/egress to the local street system. Within East Hartford, I-84, Route 2 and Route 5/15 (between I-84 and the Hartford/East Hartford town line) are the limited-access roadways.

**Major or Principal Arterials** connect major development and activity centers within the town to each other and to the interstate highway system. SR 517 (Main Street/High Street), Route 5 (Main Street/King Street/ Ellington Road) and Route 44 (Connecticut Boulevard) west of Route 5 (Connecticut Boulevard) are classified as Principal Arterials.

**Minor or Secondary Arterials** connect principal arterials and augment the traffic carrying capabilities of the entire roadway system. They provide a greater degree of access to abutting land uses and typically do not provide the same level of mobility of the higher classifications.

**Collector Streets** provide a very high degree of access to abutting land uses and a somewhat lower level of through mobility than the higher classifications.

**Local Roadways** include all remaining residential streets. While this classification contains a high percentage of the overall street mileage, these roadways provide for the lowest level of through mobility, while providing the highest level of access to the abutting land uses.

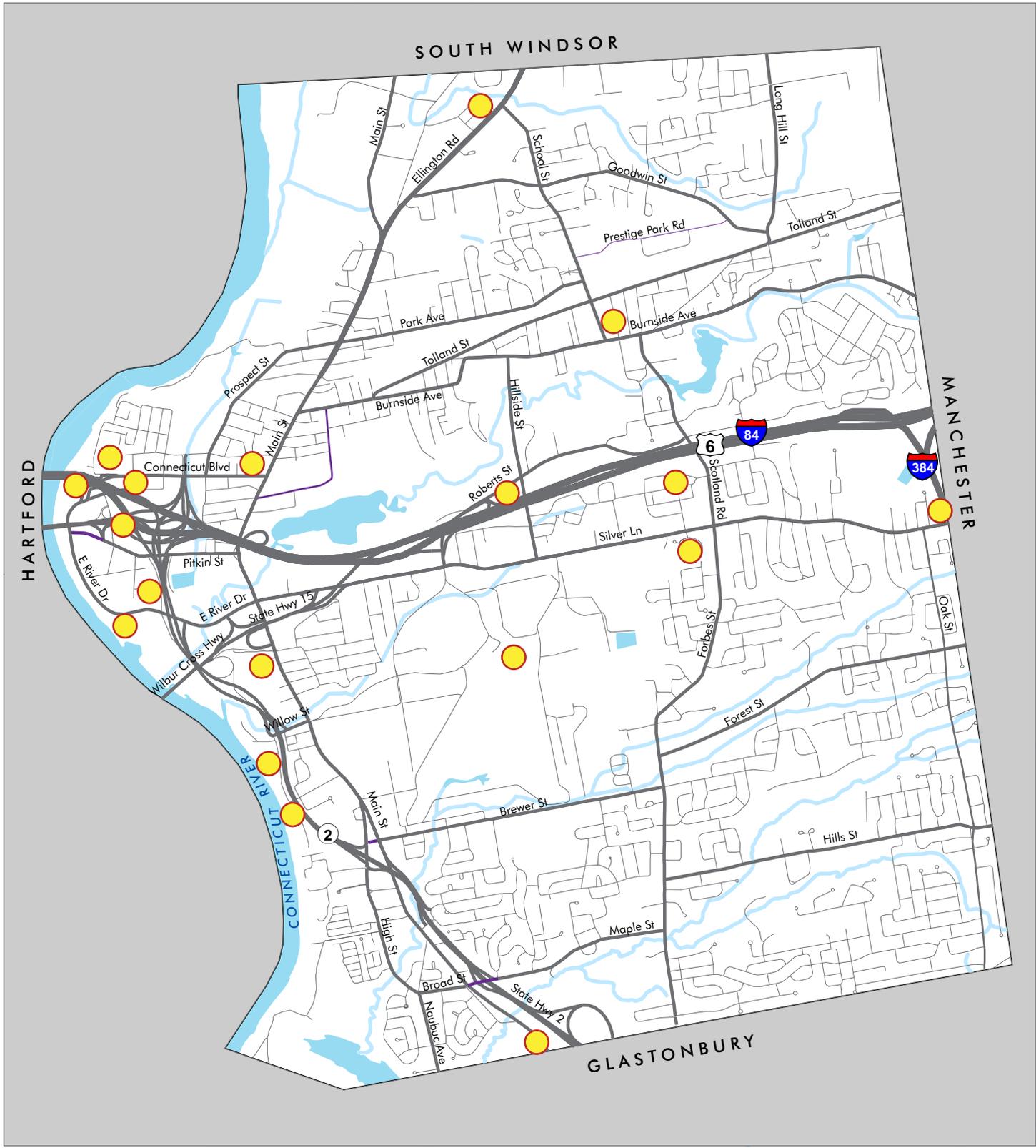
Major traffic generators within the town are identified in Figure 17. These areas are those developments that require the issuance from the State Traffic Commission of Major Traffic Generator Certificates (e.g., over 100,000 gross square feet and/or 200 parking spaces).

### **Overview of Travel Pattern Changes (2001 – 2012)**

Figure 18 shows the 2012 ADT (Average Daily Traffic) for the major roads (State and County roads) in the East Hartford area. This information is collected routinely by ConnDOT and published annually. Route 15 and Route 2 are two State roads that generally transfer the passing traffic from one side of the town to the other. The average daily traffic of these two corridors is extremely high; however it does not have a direct impact on East Hartford's road network.

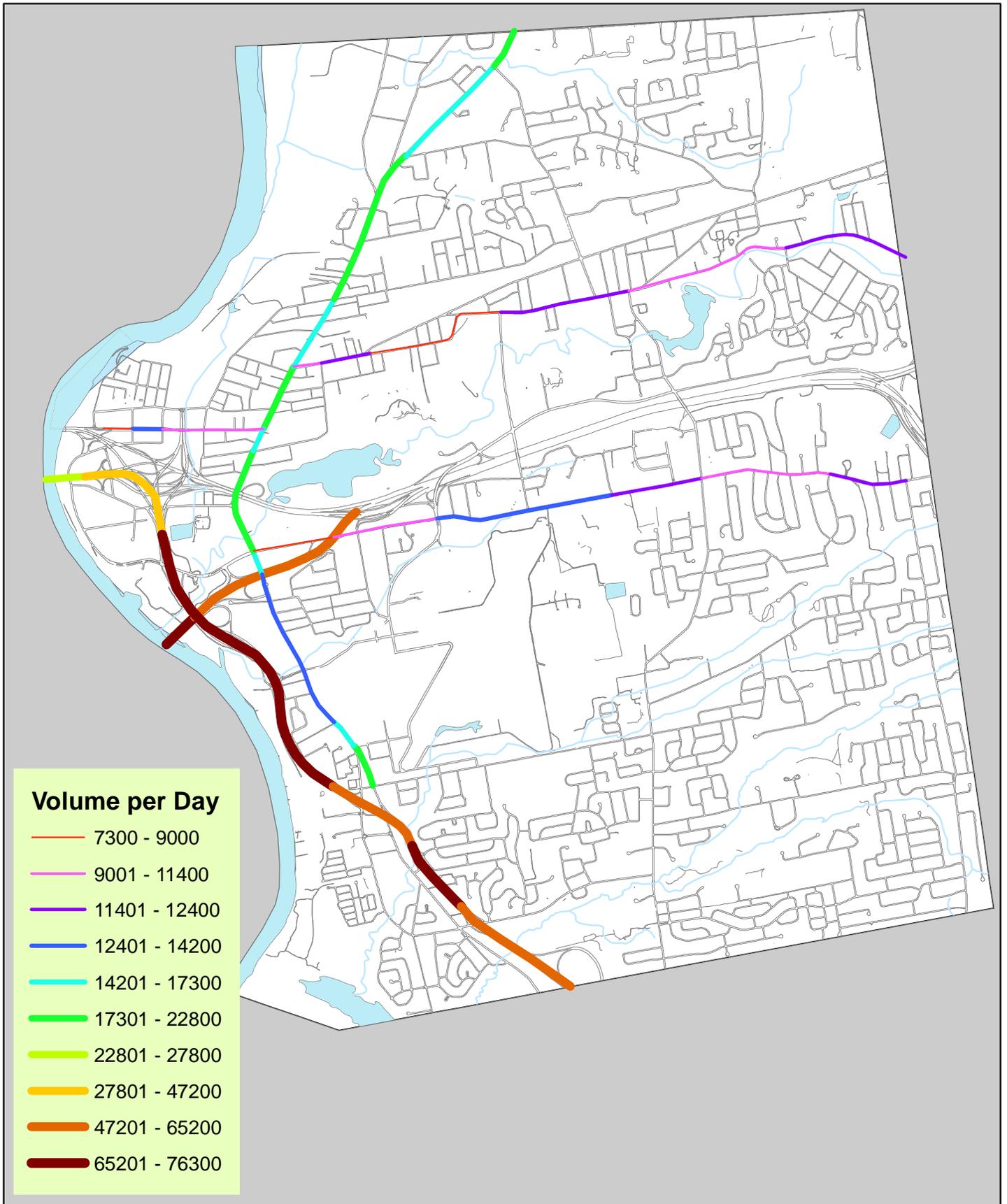
The average daily traffic along Main Street from High Street in south to Burnham Street in north varies from about 12,400 to 22,800 vehicles per day. Main Street is a four-lane arterial road with multiple signalized intersections and access to retail and office buildings. The average daily traffic along Route 44 and Route 502 (Silver Lane) varies from 7,300 to 12,400 vehicles per day. The number of lanes varies from two to six lanes on various segments of the roads.

A comparison between 2012 traffic record and 2001 records shows increases and decreases in some corridors. A 1% annual increase is normal for most urbanized areas. Potential factors which may have contributed to a decrease in traffic in some areas include: economic aspects such as the recent recession, changes in the street pattern, new developments and other miscellaneous factors might which may have shifted or decreased volumes on some road segments.



**Legend**

 High Traffic Generation Site with State Traffic Commission Certification Number



### Accident Analysis

BFJ Planning has summarized the three-year crash report for the major roads of the city (see Figure 19). The summary map does not include the freeway/highway crashes (I-84, Route 15 and Route 2). As can be seen, the intersection of Main and Brewer Streets has the highest number of crashes among other locations in the city (108 crashes per three-year period). The intersection of Silver lane and Forbes Street, as well as the four intersections of Main Street with Silver Lane, Connecticut Boulevard, Wells Avenue/Chapman Street and Prospect Street have a high number of crashes (41 to 60 crashes per three-year period).

Figure 20 depicts crashing involving pedestrians, which totaled 45 from 2009 to 2011. The following locations appear to have a high number of pedestrian-involved crashes:

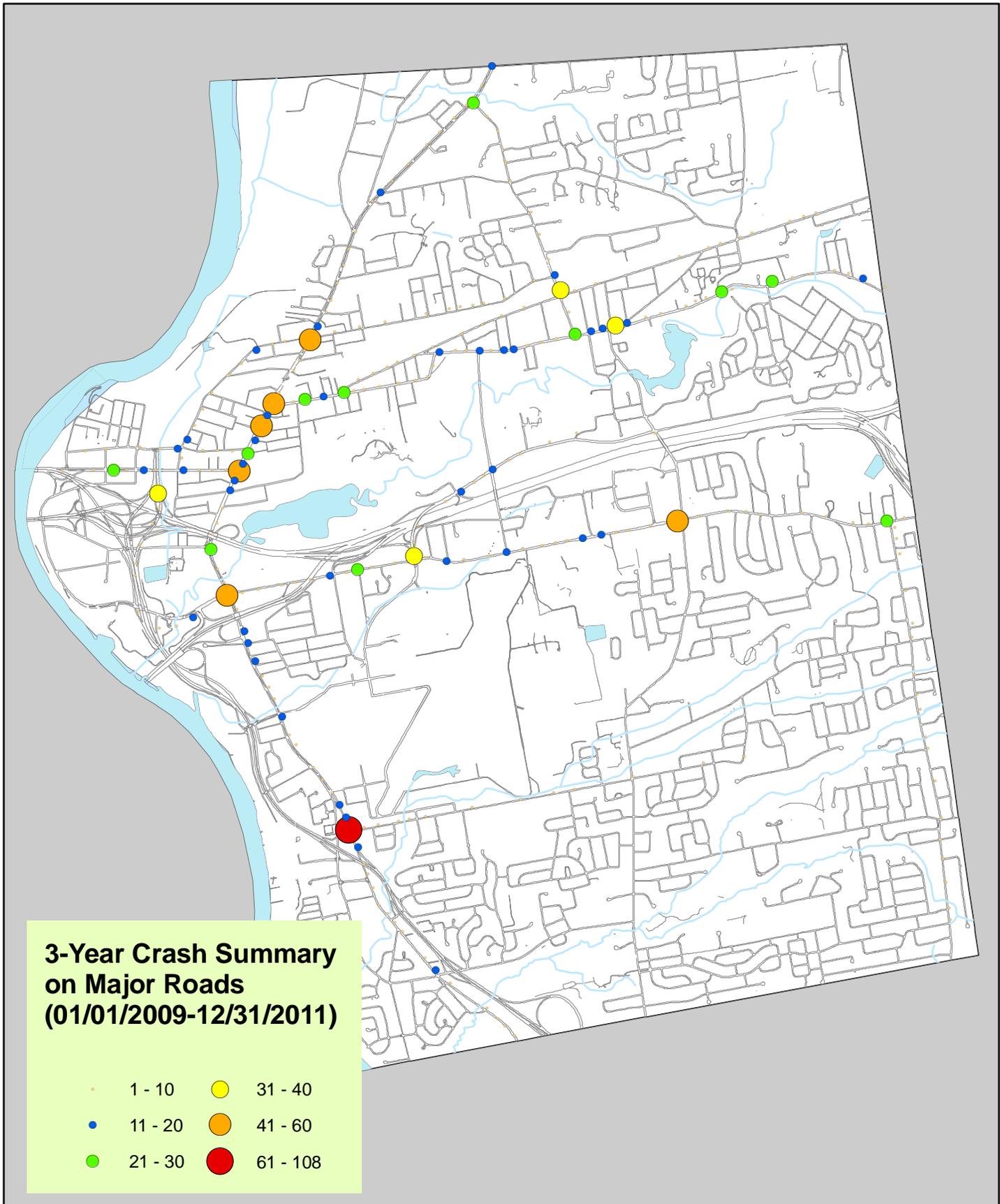
- Main Street between Silver Lane and Judson Avenue (4 crashes)
- Main Street (Route 5) between Connecticut Boulevard and Central Avenue (3 crashes)
- Burnside Avenue between Williams Street and Larrabee Street (3 crashes)
- Main Street at Maple Street (2 crashes)

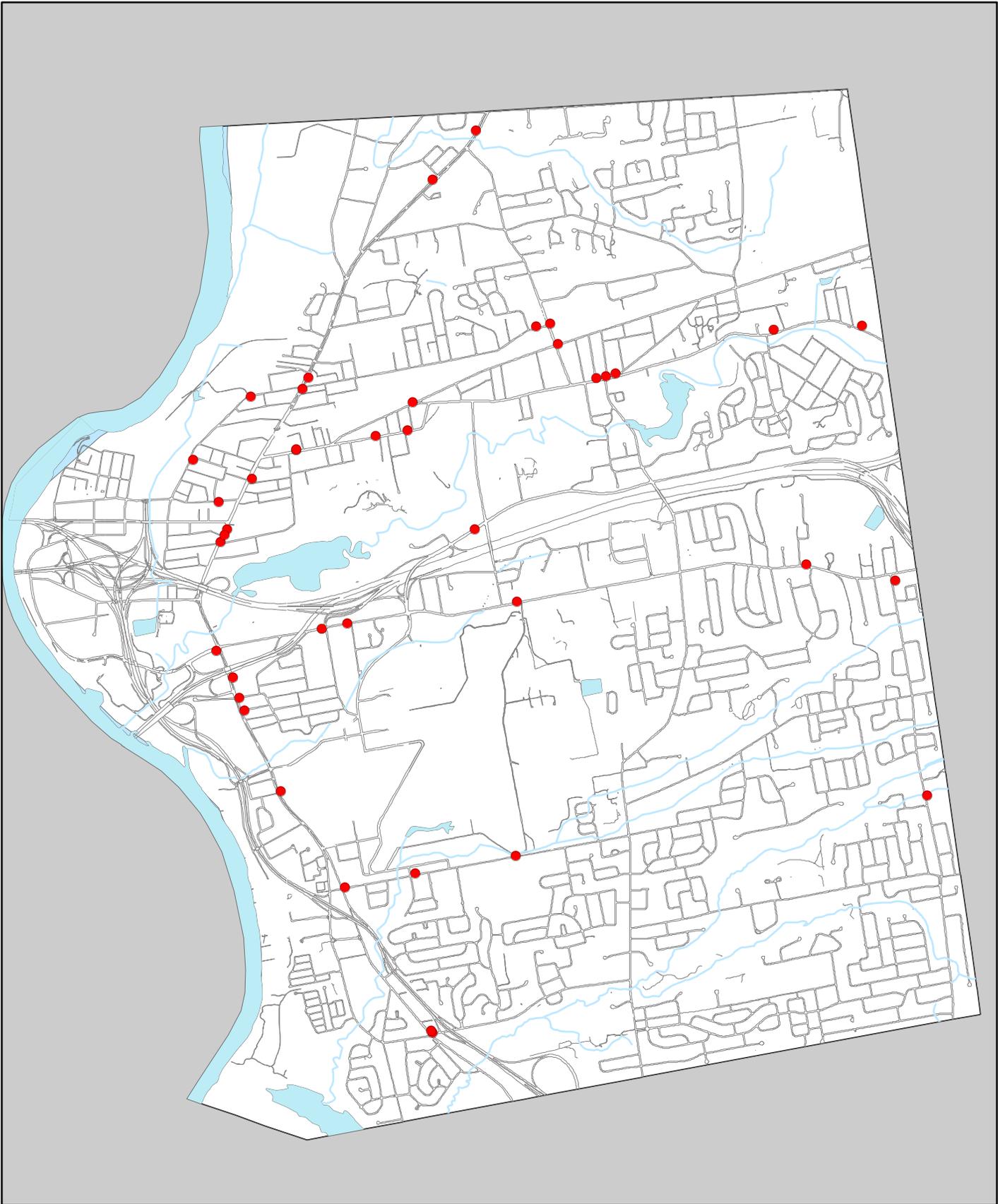
### Transit Network

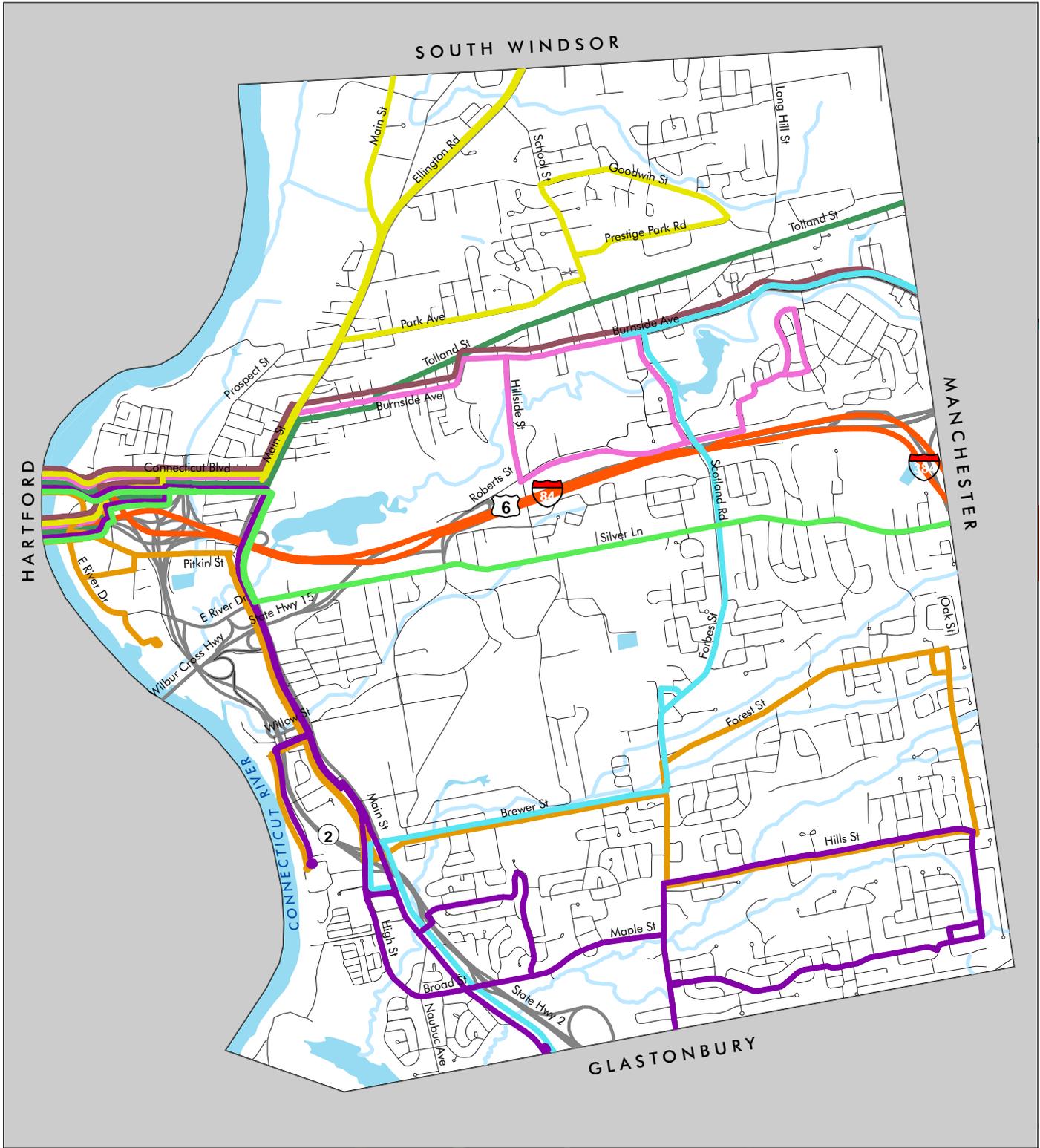
CT Transit provides local bus service within East Hartford and to surrounding towns (see Figure 21, below). A total of 10 bus routes provide service between East Hartford and the following towns: Hartford, Manchester, South Windsor, Vernon, Rockville, Wethersfield and Glastonbury. Route 85 runs express service between Manchester and Hartford but does not stop in East Hartford. As the table below shows, frequency of service varies, particularly during peak hours.

**Table 20: CT Transit Bus Routes**

Bus Route	Description	Schedule
82	Tolland Street--Buckland Hills	Weekday & Weekend
83	Silver Lane	Weekday & Weekend
84	Tolland Street --Rockville	Weekday & Weekend
85	MCC Flyover	Weekday
86	Burnside Avenue - Mayberry Village	Weekday
87	Brewer Street	Weekday & Saturday
88	Burnside Avenue	Weekday & Weekend
91	Forbes Street Crosstown	Weekday & Weekend
94	Park Avenue	Weekday & Weekend
95	Glastonbury	Weekday & Weekend
96	John Fich Boulevard	Weekday & Saturday







CT Transit Bus Routes		
82-84 Tolland Street--Buckland Hills	86 Burnside Avenue - Mayberry Village	91 Forbes Street Crosstown
83 Silver Lane	87 Brewer Street	94-96 Park Avenue, John Fich Blvd
85 MCC Flyover	88 Burnside Avenue	95 Glastonbury

### 9.3 Pedestrian Circulation and Bikeways

Today, most of the designated bicycle pathways in East Hartford are located within parks and along trails. Chapter 5 highlights the existing trail network in East Hartford, including the proposed extension of the Charter Oak Greenway, one of the most important multi-use trails in the Capitol Region. The trail, which is part of the East Coast Greenway, originates at Forbes Street and Ridgewood Road in East Hartford, running eastward along I-84 and I-384. It is planned to continue along Silver Lane and through Rentschler Field, eventually connecting to the Connecticut River waterfront.

Although there are off-street networks for non-motorized transportation, there are gaps in the streetscape network both for bicycling and walking. Pedestrian treatments and connections should be evaluated throughout the town, especially along important corridors such as Main Street and Burnside Avenue. This was echoed in the first public workshop, where residents expressed their desire to make Hartford a more walkable/bikeable community. The town should consider traffic calming techniques that reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on pedestrians and bicyclists. This might include streetscape improvements that clearly identify and reduce pedestrian crossing distances or that create planted median strips. Continuous street trees and landscaping treatments have the potential to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians and motorists. Two examples of successful median treatments in and around East Hartford are shown below. Glastonbury Boulevard shows how a median planted solely with grass can be a simple, elegant and low-maintenance solution to transform a street. Connecticut Boulevard shows how a median planted with trees can be a simple, elegant and low-maintenance solution to transform a street.



Glastonbury Boulevard, Glastonbury, CT



Connecticut Boulevard, East Hartford, CT

Some improvements such as gateways or physical landmarks can identify a commercial area and create a sense of place. Programming sponsored by the Town and community organizations can also help to foster a culture where walking and bicycling is embraced. One notable suggestion at the opening public workshop was to close Main Street to vehicular traffic for a weekend afternoon. This community event would help to enliven downtown businesses while encouraging people to walk and bike.

### **Burnside Avenue**

In response to accidents involving cyclists and upon a request from the Town of East Hartford, ConnDOT has investigated options to improve bicycle safety in the town. The Transportation Commissioner's Report on Complete Streets identified a 2.76-mile stretch of Burnside Avenue as a viable location for a "road diet" to improve bicycle operations and safety. The section, extending between Main Street and Mary Street, is currently striped for four lanes, two in each direction, with parking permitted in the outside travel lane. The proposed road diet will reduce the vehicular lanes to two lanes, plus bicycle lanes, with dedicated turn lanes at selected intersections and shoulders wide enough for parking. Additionally, the road diet will improve connectivity to other paths for bicyclists including streets with wide shoulders (i.e. Mary Street) and trails such as the Charter Oak Greenway.

The Burnside Avenue road diet will be the first of its kind completed by ConnDOT on a state roadway. The present schedule indicates that the design will be completed in spring 2014, with construction anticipated to start in spring 2015, based on the availability of funding. The estimated construction cost for this project is approximately \$2.8 million and it is anticipated to be undertaken with 90% Federal funds and 10% State funds.

## **9.4 Roadway Maintenance**

While the Town is responsible for the upkeep of only a few bridges, its roadway network is extensive and requires ongoing attention. A 2002 Pavement Management Study documented the Town's roadway conditions and highlighted recommended improvements with an analysis of long-term strategies and funding scenarios to keep the network in fair condition. Starting in 2004, the Town began implementing a rigorous capital repairs program on arterial and collector roadways that included localized drainage repairs, curbing replacement, pedestrian ramps and new driveway aprons. Figure 22 shows the roadway improvements implemented between 2004 and 2012 as well as those included in the 2013-2014 bond program. The 120.4 miles that have been resurfaced since 2004 represent about 30% of the entire roadway system. Figure 23 shows the 2009 condition of each road using the surface distress data collected as part of the 2002 study. In 2005, the Town had a network-wide average PCI (Pavement Condition Index) of 65. Between 2005 and 2009, the arterial and collector roads improved to an average PCI of 85. The residential roadways have lagged in their condition improvement compared to the major roads and are in need of widespread structural improvement.

Systemwide, the current funding level of approximately \$3.5 million is insufficient to address network deficiencies. Given limited resources, the 2009 study suggests that major rehabilitation work on streets showing structural base problems be undertaken simultaneously with a program of annually sealing streets in good condition to postpone future costly repairs. About \$7 million a year is needed to keep the roads at the same condition. To generate further improvements, the Town should consider a roads program of \$10 million annually over the next several years.

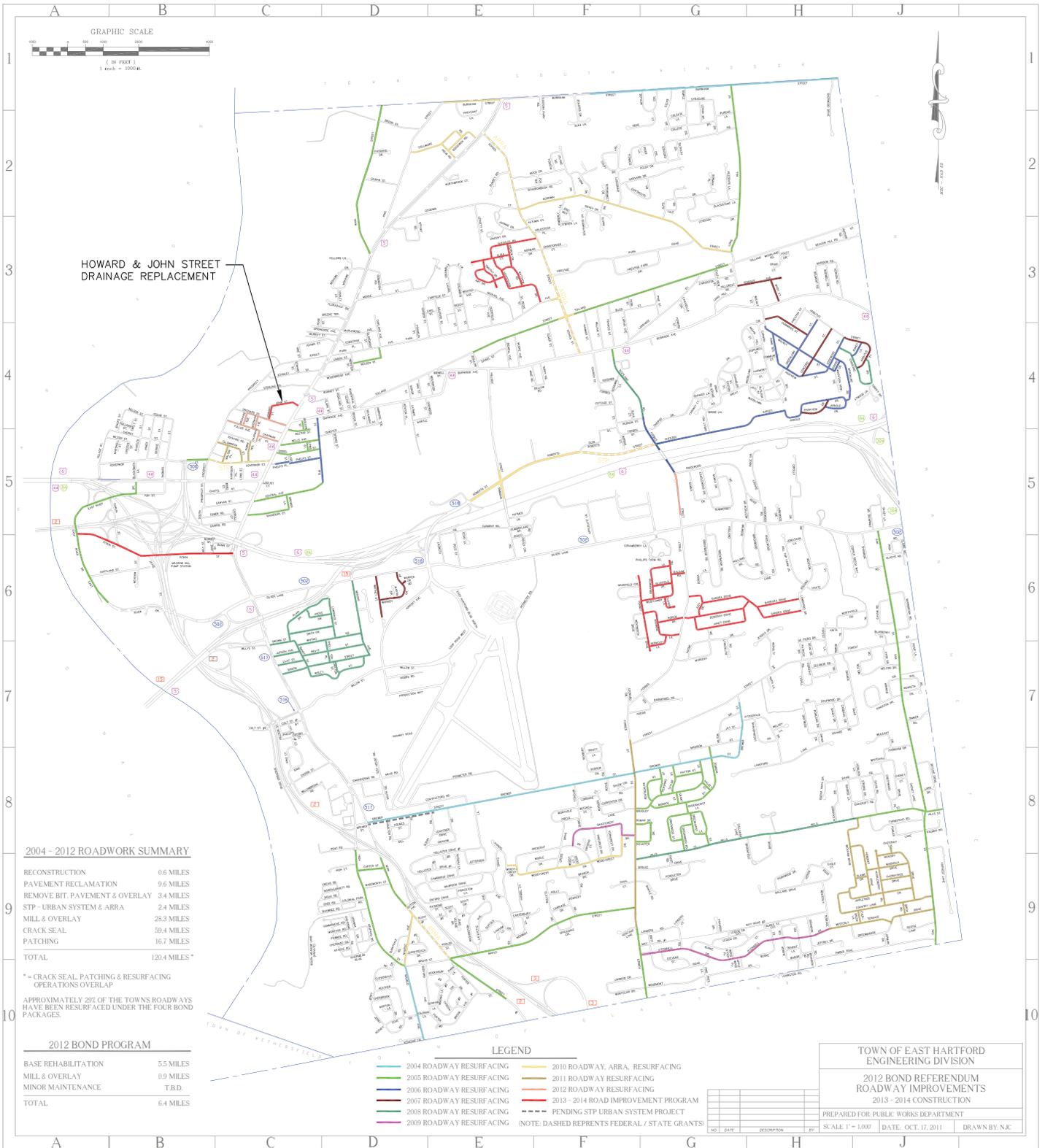
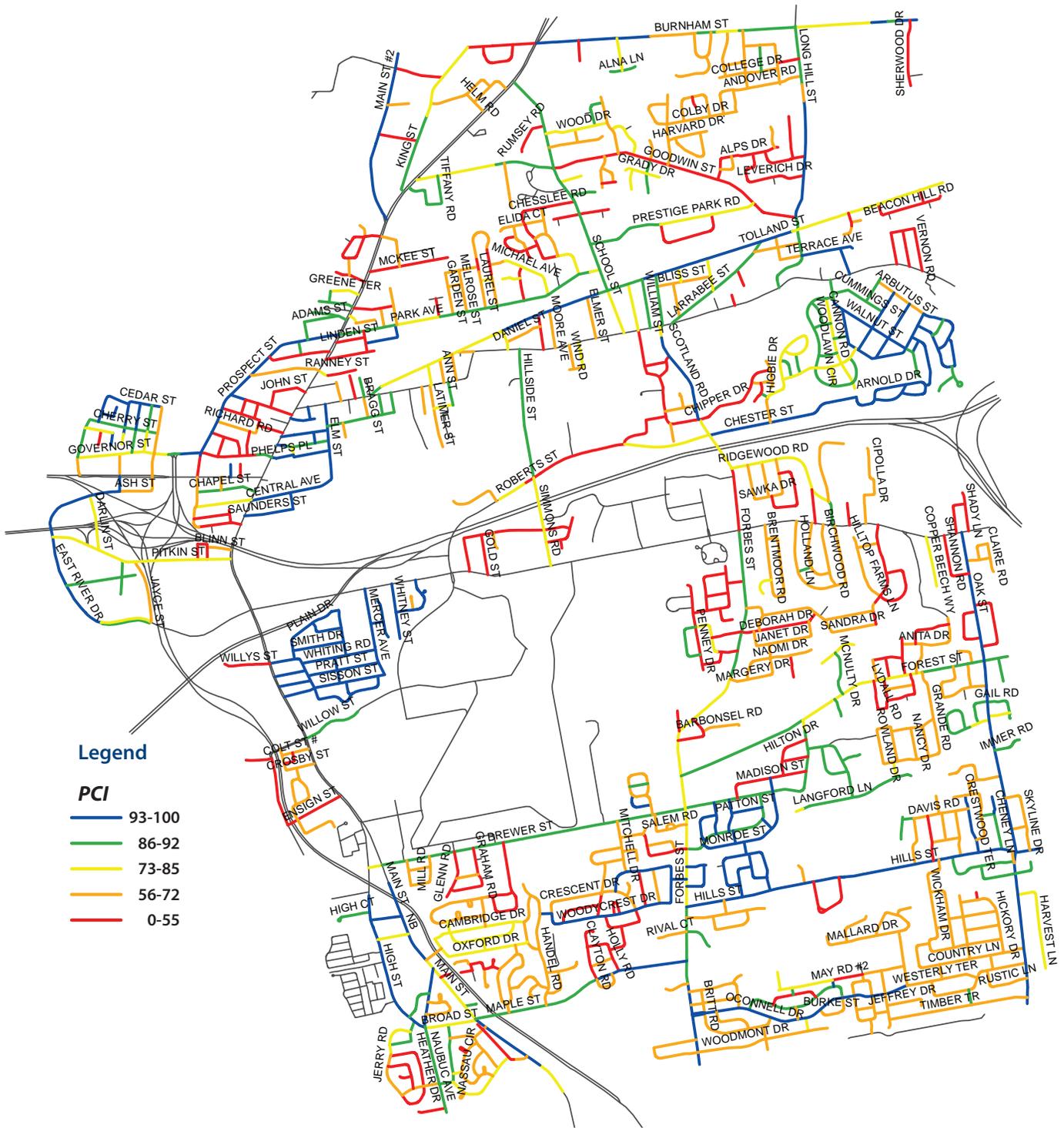


FIGURE 22: ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (2004-2012)



Pavement Condition Index: PCI was generated for each inventoried pavement management section in East Hartford using the surface distress data collected by VHB. PCI is measured on a scale of one hundred to zero, with one hundred representing a pavement in perfect condition and zero describing a road in impassable condition.

## **9.5 Future Roadway Needs**

This section identifies general roadway improvements that the Town of East Hartford should consider as development increases and reinvestment of existing properties occurs. The recommendations are structured to mitigate and calm traffic flow, improve traffic circulation, enhance safety (both vehicular and pedestrian) and encourage multi-modal travel.

### ***Main Street Corridor***

As highlighted in the Town of East Hartford Strategic Economic Development Plan and Land Use Plan Update Recommendations, the creation of traffic patterns conducive for pedestrians in the downtown area is desired. It is recommended that traffic calming techniques, to reduce the adverse impact of vehicular traffic on pedestrians, be evaluated.

Streetscape improvements that clearly identify and reduce pedestrian crossing distances should be incorporated wherever possible. In an effort to rejuvenate the existing retail development on Main Street or the mixed-use development on Burnside Avenue, other items such as locating parking behind buildings and creating a planted median strip should be considered. The 1990 Plan of Development proposed a landscaped median down the center. According to that plan, such an approach would provide a mid-street “pedestrian haven” and would transform the image of Main Street from that of an overly-wide traffic corridor back to the traditional, pedestrian-oriented retail center. The Main Street median concept is shown in Figure 24. The creation of gateways or physical landmarks to identify the commercial area may also be desirable. In all cases, the design should be compatible with existing traffic signal networks.

### ***Ensign Street and Riverside Road***

There are a number of opportunities to improve the connectivity of Goodwin College and the waterfront to Main Street (Figure 24). Ensign Street serves as one two main entrances to the College from Main Street; the other being on Willow Street to the North. In contrast to Willow Street, the residential neighborhood along Ensign Street is predominantly owned by the college, and thus is likely to be connected closely with the institution in the future. Improved pedestrian connections therefore are important not only to connect the neighborhood to campus but also to bring activity to Main Street. This could be achieved through upgraded sidewalks, landscaping and gateway signage. Currently, the sidewalks along Ensign Street do not continue under the Route 2 overpass. This pedestrian connection should be extended all the way to the College and the waterfront, as consistent with the approved Goodwin College Master Plan.

The Town should also consider improving Goodwin College’s connectivity to Route 2 and Main Street by extending Riverside Drive to Pent Road to the south. This will also help to relieve some traffic from local streets. Both of these improvements are discussed further in Chapter 11.

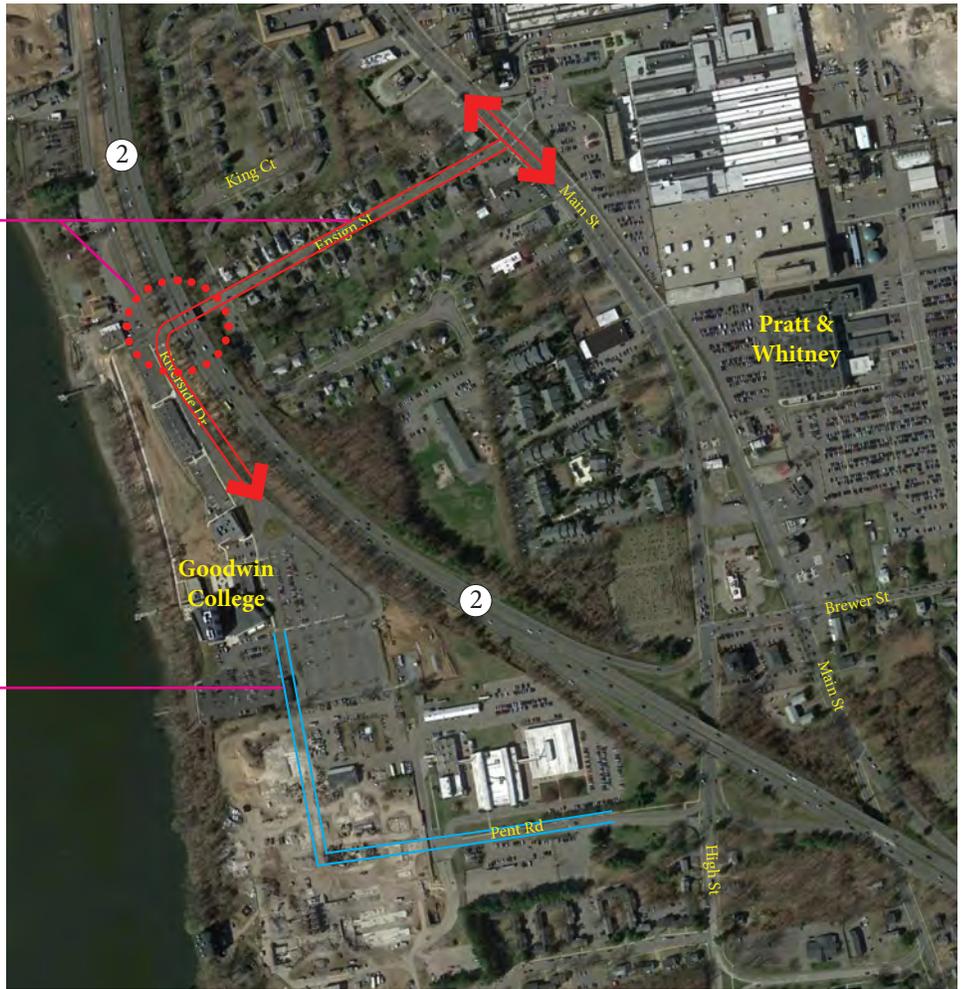
# Transportation Improvements near Goodwin College

## Ensign Street

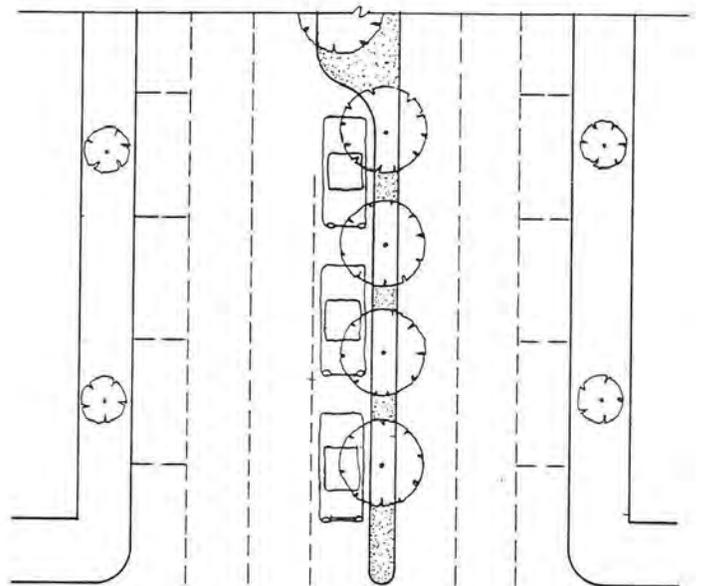
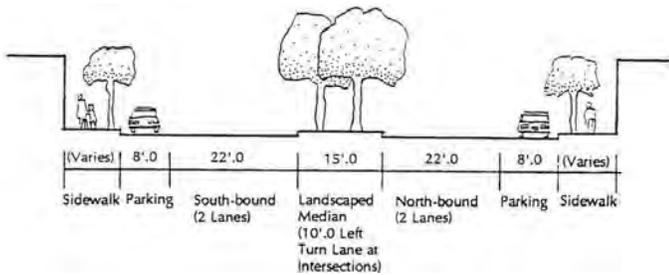
Sidewalk, landscaping and gateway improvements from Main Street to Riverside Drive. Improved pedestrian connection under Route 2.

## Riverside Drive

Roadway connection between Riverside Drive and Pent Road



## Main Street Median Plan (from 1990 Plan of Development)



### **Rentschler Field: North-South Connection**

With a large area of land within Rentschler Field still available for future development, the Town has a good opportunity to review proposed roadway improvements and make recommendations to mitigate adverse impacts. This special project area is discussed in Chapter 11. To the extent possible, existing traffic circulation and flow on adjacent roadways should be monitored such that traffic from the University of Connecticut football stadium and other uses on the property do not adversely affect surrounding neighborhoods. Creating a north-south corridor to connect to Main Street via Brewer Street is an opportunity to promote connectivity and serve the expected development of the property without placing additional burdens on the local street system. The precise location of this road, which was proposed in the Master Plan for Rentschler Field site, has yet to be decided. During the development process, plans should be evaluated by Town staff to ensure optimum placement and coordination with the existing roadway network, minimizing impacts to the wetlands north of Brewer Street and the residential neighborhood south of the site.

### **Silver Lane**

The segment of Silver Lane between Simmons Road and Forbes Street serves numerous commercial/retail developments. The pavement cross-section continues to vary between four and five lanes. As development along Silver Lane occurs, traffic circulation and accident data should be evaluated to determine if exclusive turn lanes or widened sections are needed.

## **9.6 Summary of Recommendations**

The priority objective of any transportation plan is to maintain an efficient transportation system, which meets the needs of community residents, while respecting existing patterns of land-use development in the community. The recommendations in this chapter show how the existing roadway network can be improved to enhance safety, eliminate or mitigate existing areas of congestion and provide for future growth and development in accordance with the goals established in the Plan.

The following items were identified as specific areas of focus for the Town to consider:

- Create pedestrian-friendly traffic corridors in the downtown area. Traffic calming techniques to reduce the adverse impact of vehicular traffic on pedestrians should be evaluated. Streetscape improvements that clearly identify and reduce pedestrian crossing distances should be incorporated wherever possible. The creation of gateways or physical landmarks to identify a commercial area or a specific place may also be desirable. Design should be compatible with the existing traffic signal networks in place.

- Consider the creation of a center-landscaped median along Main Street and other minor arterials and collectors where appropriate, to improve overall aesthetics. All designs should be compatible with the existing traffic signal networks in place.
- Evaluate traffic calming techniques to reduce the adverse impact of vehicular traffic on residential neighborhoods. The Town should develop a traffic-calming program that assures communication, consensus and rational allocation of resources. Access management techniques such as combining driveways or restricting turning movements should be evaluated as opportunities arise.
- Support ConnDOT's road diet plan for Burnside Avenue and consider bicycle paths to increase connectivity along adjacent local roads.
- A north-south roadway east of Main Street should be constructed as large-scale development begins to occur within Rentschler Field.
- Improve connectivity of Goodwin College and Main Street through improvements along Ensign Street including a continuous pedestrian connection underneath the Route 2 overpass and extension of Riverside Drive to Pent Road.
- Undertake major rehabilitation work on streets exhibiting structural base problems simultaneously with a program of annually sealing streets in good condition to postpone future costly repairs.



## 10.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 10.1 Introduction

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

*Promote economic development activity to attract new business and employment opportunities as a way to benefit population, housing and economic trends in East Hartford.*

*Build on the existing industrial and manufacturing base to promote new diversified business investment in the town.*

*Recreate Main Street as a showcase of the town, establishing the central business district and the southern end (Goodwin College area) as vital and active nodes for living, eating, working and entertainment.*

*Take advantage of the location, views and amenities associated with the riverfront as leverage for economic development and tax base for the Town.*

*Plan for and develop viable and attractive commercial areas outside of the central business district to meet the needs for goods and services of residents and visitors to East Hartford.*

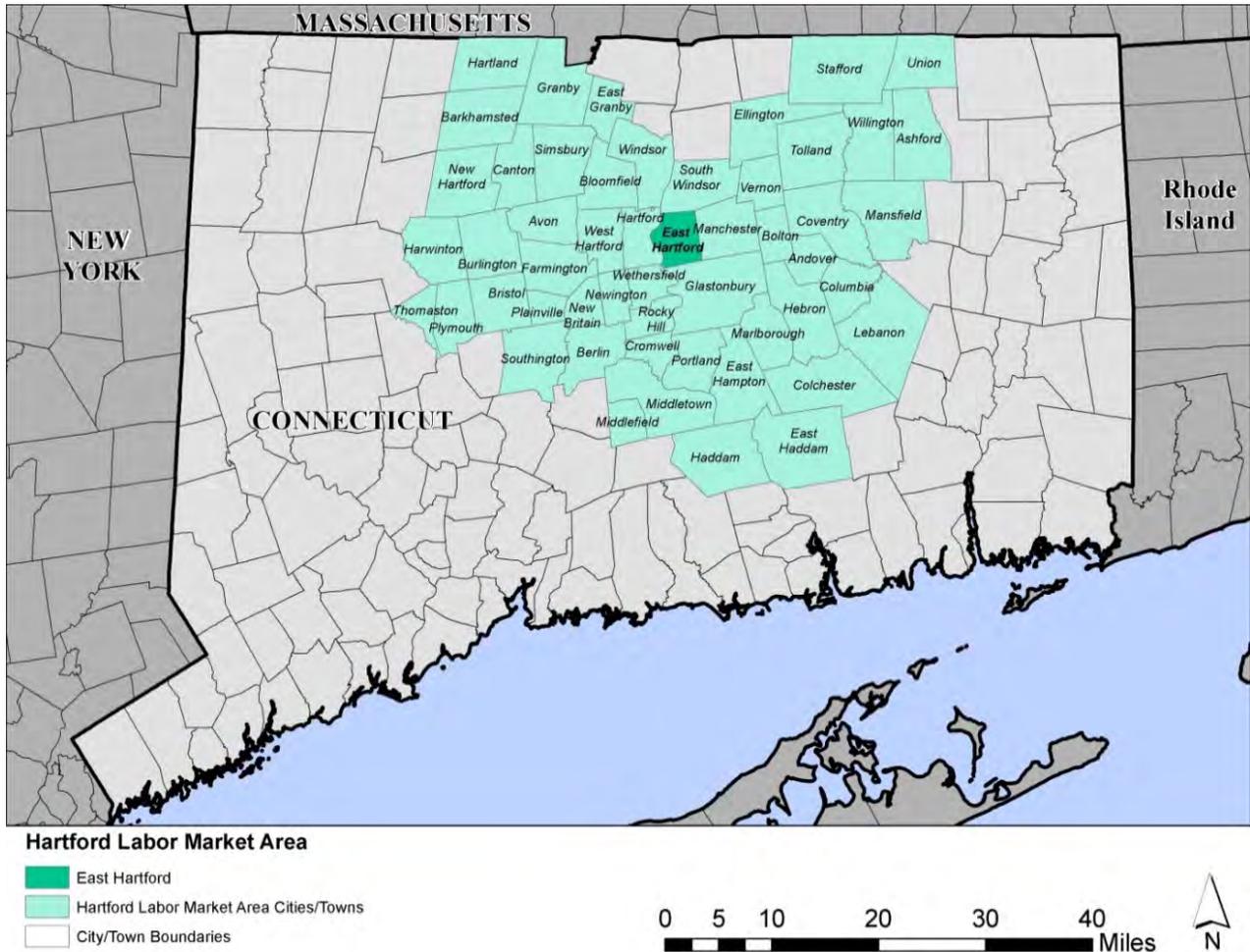
### 10.2 Local and Regional Trends

East Hartford is at the core of the Hartford Labor Market Area (LMA), as defined by the Connecticut Department of Labor (See Figure 25). This definition reflects patterns of commutation and goods supply into and out of Hartford. Because of the interconnectivity of this area, it is important to look at conditions in the region as a whole, as well as in East Hartford.

#### 10.2.1 Resident Labor Force/Unemployment

As shown in the table that follows the figure, the resident labor force (all those working or looking for work) in East Hartford increased by 6.8% between 2002 and 2012, according to the Connecticut Department of Labor. However, the number of employed persons within that group has grown only slightly – from 23,469 to 23,880, or an increase of only 1.8%.

Figure 25: Hartford Labor Market Area



Source: CT DOL Local Area Unemployment Statistics

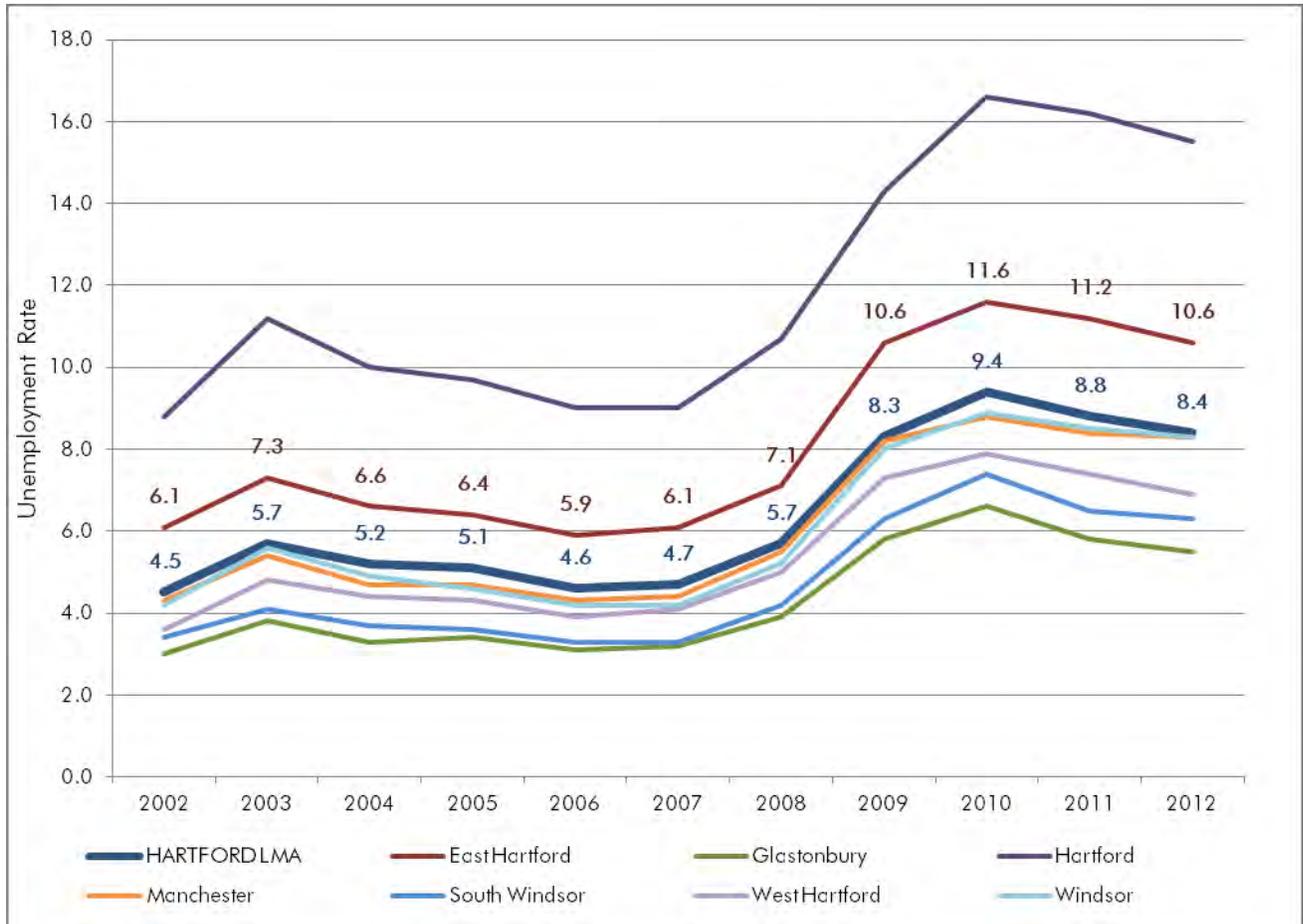
Table 21: Labor Force Status, East Hartford, Annual Average 2005-2012

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2002	24,998	23,469	1,529	6.1%
2003	24,922	23,098	1,826	7.3%
2004	24,640	23,022	1,618	6.6%
2005	24,700	23,116	1,584	6.4%
2006	24,812	23,358	1,454	5.9%
2007	25,046	23,521	1,525	6.1%
2008	25,376	23,570	1,806	7.1%
2009	25,921	23,184	2,737	10.6%
2010	27,299	24,120	3,179	11.6%
2011	27,373	24,318	3,055	11.2%
2012	26,700	23,880	2,820	10.6%

Source: CT DOL Local Area Unemployment Statistics

This differential between those willing to work and those with jobs is reflected in the increasing unemployment rate, which went from 6.1% in 2002 to 10.6% in 2012. This compares to a national unemployment rate of 8.1% and State and Labor Market Area rates of 8.4%. As shown in the chart that follows, East Hartford’s unemployment trend follows the regional pattern.

**Table 22: Average Annual Unemployment Rates: Hartford LMA, East Hartford and Other Selected Municipalities, 2002-2012**



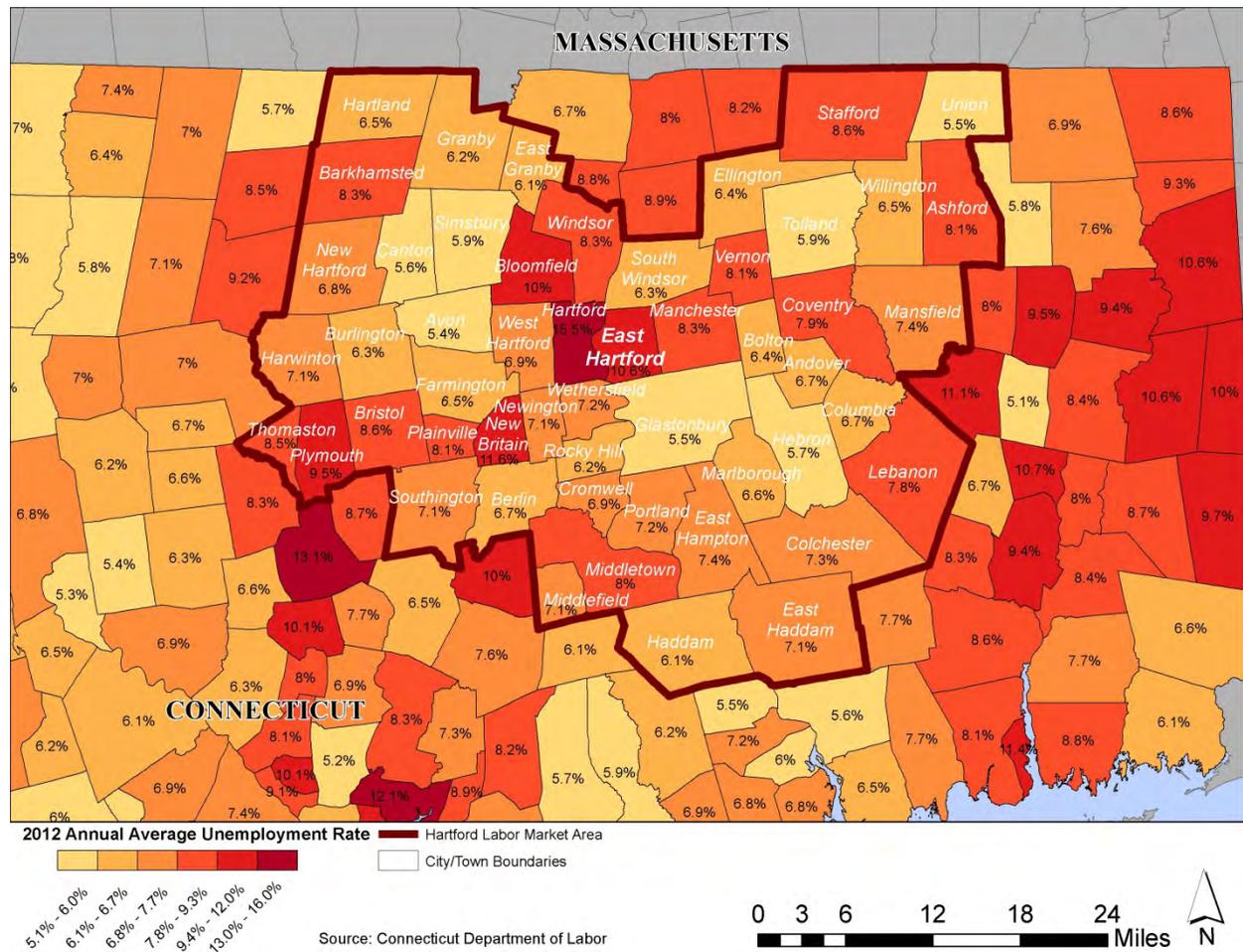
Source: CT DOL Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Figure 26, presents annual average unemployment rates by municipality in 2012. Within the LMA, East Hartford’s rate is exceeded only by the City of Hartford and New Britain (15.5% and 11.6%, respectively). The only discernible geographic pattern of unemployment is the expected higher rates in proximity to central cities. Other high unemployment areas are those that have lost major industries.

### 10.2.2 Resident Employment

The CT DOL reports only summary data, so the Census Bureau’s Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer Household Dataset (CES LEHD) was accessed through its OnTheMap tool, to gather more detailed information on the characteristics of East Hartford’s employed residents.

Figure 26: Unemployment Rates in the Region



### 10.2.3 Industry

Table 10.2 shows the number of employed East Hartford residents by industry for the years 2002 and 2011. Categories highlighted in dark green have seen growth of 15% or more since 2002; those highlighted in light green have grown between 5% and 15%. Categories highlighted in dark gray have decreased by 15% or more since 2002; those highlighted in light gray have decreased by between 5% and 15%.

The data show that in both 2002 and 2011, the largest share of employed residents worked in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry. This industry category strengthened over the course of the decade, growing by 37.8% and increasing in share from 13.5% of all resident employment to 18%. The growth in health care is a reflection of national trends.

**Table 23: East Hartford Employed Labor Force by Industry, 2002 and 2011**

	2002		2011		2002-2011
	Employed Labor Force	Share	Employed Labor Force	Share	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,371	13.5%	4,644	18.0%	37.8%
Retail Trade	3,219	12.9%	3,043	11.8%	-5.5%
Manufacturing	2,926	11.7%	2,362	9.2%	-19.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,641	6.6%	2,101	8.2%	28.0%
Educational Services	1,958	7.8%	1,955	7.6%	-0.2%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1,708	6.8%	1,878	7.3%	10.0%
Finance and Insurance	2,259	9.0%	1,861	7.2%	-17.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,451	5.8%	1,502	5.8%	3.5%
Public Administration	1,042	4.2%	1,165	4.5%	11.8%
Wholesale Trade	1,286	5.1%	1,073	4.2%	-16.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	707	2.8%	952	3.7%	34.7%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	951	3.8%	931	3.6%	-2.1%
Construction	941	3.8%	640	2.5%	-32.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	323	1.3%	462	1.8%	43.0%
Information	525	2.1%	417	1.6%	-20.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	314	1.3%	354	1.4%	12.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	309	1.2%	289	1.1%	-6.5%
Utilities	115	0.5%	121	0.5%	5.2%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

Retail Trade is the next largest employer of local residents. In 2011, more than one in 10 employed residents (11.8%) had a retail job. The level of retail employment has decreased since 2002, when it accounted for 176 more workers, or a total of 12.9% of the employed labor force. Just over 9% of employed residents (2,362) have manufacturing jobs. This is a decrease of 564 jobs, or 19.3% since 2002.

The economic structure of the area is changing significantly. Although the number of residents working in Education, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services as well as Other Services have changed only slightly (less than 5% in either direction) since 2002, one-half of the 18 listed industries have experienced either a positive or negative change of more than 15%. Along with Health Care and Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Service employment among residents increased by 28% to account for 2,101 jobs, or 8.2% of job holders. Transportation and

Warehousing and Management of Companies and Enterprises have also seen great change in terms of growth rates at 34.7% and 43.0%, respectively; however, in terms of actual employment, these represent gains of only 350 jobs in total.

Significant losses in the number of East Hartford working residents have been seen in Finance and Insurance (17.6 %, 398 jobs), Construction (32%, 301 jobs), Wholesale Trade (16.6%, 113 jobs), and Information (20.6%, 108 jobs).

### 10.2.4 Earnings

As seen in the previous section, the shift in employment for East Hartford residents has been from higher-paying jobs in the Manufacturing, Finance & Insurance and Construction industries, to the lower-paying Health Care and Social services and Accommodation and Food Services. In terms of earnings as grouped by the Census, the distribution of earnings has shifted since 2002 from 28.3% to 24.6% of workers making the least amount categorized of \$1,250 per month, and from 28.2% to 39.1% making the highest (more than \$3,333) per month.

**Table 24: East Hartford Resident Earnings, 2002 to 2011**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
\$1,250 per month or less	7,108	6,582	6,595	6,612	6,573	6,569	6,371	5,827	5,644	6,336
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	10,928	10,470	10,351	10,435	10,172	9,955	10,080	9,421	9,070	9,377
More than \$3,333 per month	7,089	7,118	7,420	8,017	8,963	9,029	9,801	9,610	9,343	10,074
\$1,250 per month or less	28.3%	27.2%	27.1%	26.4%	25.6%	25.7%	24.3%	23.4%	23.5%	24.6%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	43.5%	43.3%	42.5%	41.6%	39.6%	39.0%	38.4%	37.9%	37.7%	36.4%
More than \$3,333 per month	28.2%	29.4%	30.5%	32.0%	34.9%	35.3%	37.3%	38.7%	38.8%	39.1%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

However, it is important to note that the highest category, when converted to an annual amount, is only \$40,000 or more. A full 60% of working residents make less than \$40,000 a year. Almost one in four residents have personal earnings in the lowest wage category, or \$15,000 a year; i.e., they make only minimum wage.

### 10.2.5 Commutation

As shown in Table 24 and further illustrated by distribution in Chart 11, the most common places of work have not changed significantly between 2002 and 2011. The greatest number of employed East Hartford residents work across the river in Hartford, followed by East Hartford and West Hartford.

**Table 25: East Hartford Employed Residents by Top 10 Places of Work, 2002-2011**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Hartford	5,168	5,036	4,984	4,961	5,167	5,137	5,187	5,079	4,998	5,174	6	0.1%
East Hartford	4,263	4,084	3,826	3,974	3,706	3,474	3,463	3,258	3,139	3,216	-1,047	-24.6%
West Hartford	1,012	996	943	1,028	1,034	1,096	1,101	980	915	934	-78	-7.7%
Manchester	607	572	510	635	589	591	621	576	665	619	12	2.0%
Glastonbury Center	599	590	610	648	622	694	735	672	605	611	12	2.0%
Newington	515	489	529	531	577	570	584	573	499	511	-4	-0.8%
Wethersfield	376	367	401	398	417	402	337	372	428	398	22	5.9%
New Britain	299	265	278	260	299	335	355	355	389	358	59	19.7%
Middletown	453	459	385	366	472	439	440	411	325	351	-102	-22.5%
Westport	29	25	34	31	65	82	116	137	153	349	320	1103.4%
All Other Locations	11,804	11,287	11,866	12,232	12,760	12,733	13,313	12,445	11,941	13,266	1,462	12.4%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

The most notable shift in employment is the number of employed residents that both live and work in East Hartford, declining by 24.6%, or more than 1,000 workers, between 2002 and 2011. This is a shift from 17% of all resident employment to only 12.5%.

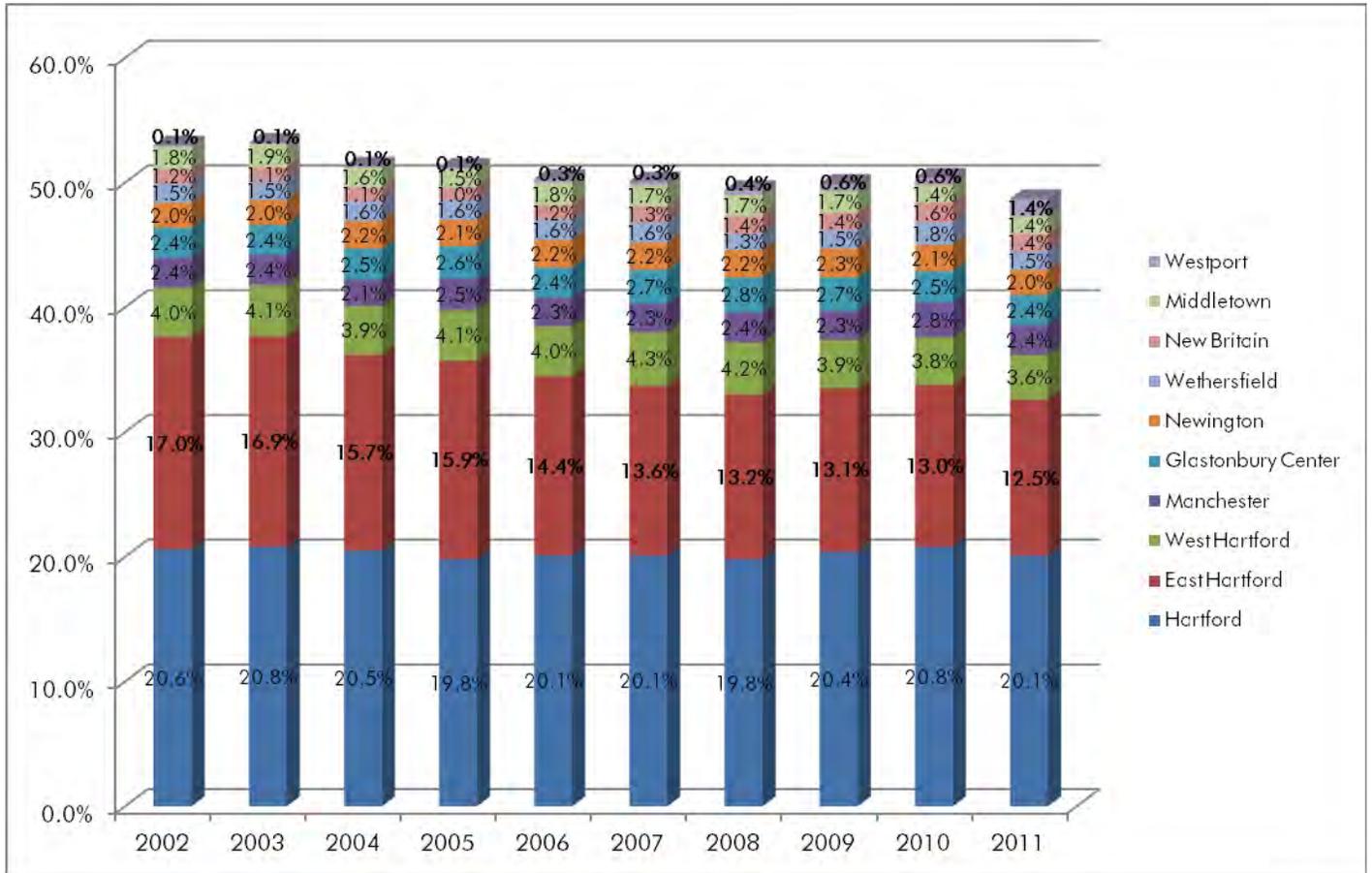
There have been job losses for East Hartford residents in West Hartford and Middletown as well, 180 jobs in total. In terms of increases in jobs, the number of East Hartford residents working in Westport has increased from 29 in 2002 to 349 in 2011, or from 0.1% to 1.4% of all resident jobs.

### 10.2.6 East Hartford Employment

The previous sections discussed where East Hartford residents were working. This section will discuss East Hartford and the surrounding area as a place of employment, i.e., the jobs in East Hartford, regardless of where the workers live. Table 10.5, on the following page, shows the trend in employment in East Hartford and neighboring towns from 2002 to 2011. In the most general terms, East Hartford and Manchester lost jobs, while the rest of the vicinity – Hartford, West Hartford, Glastonbury and Newington – added jobs over the course of the decade.

**Chart 11: Distribution of East Hartford Employed by Top Ten Places of Work, 2002-2011**

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD



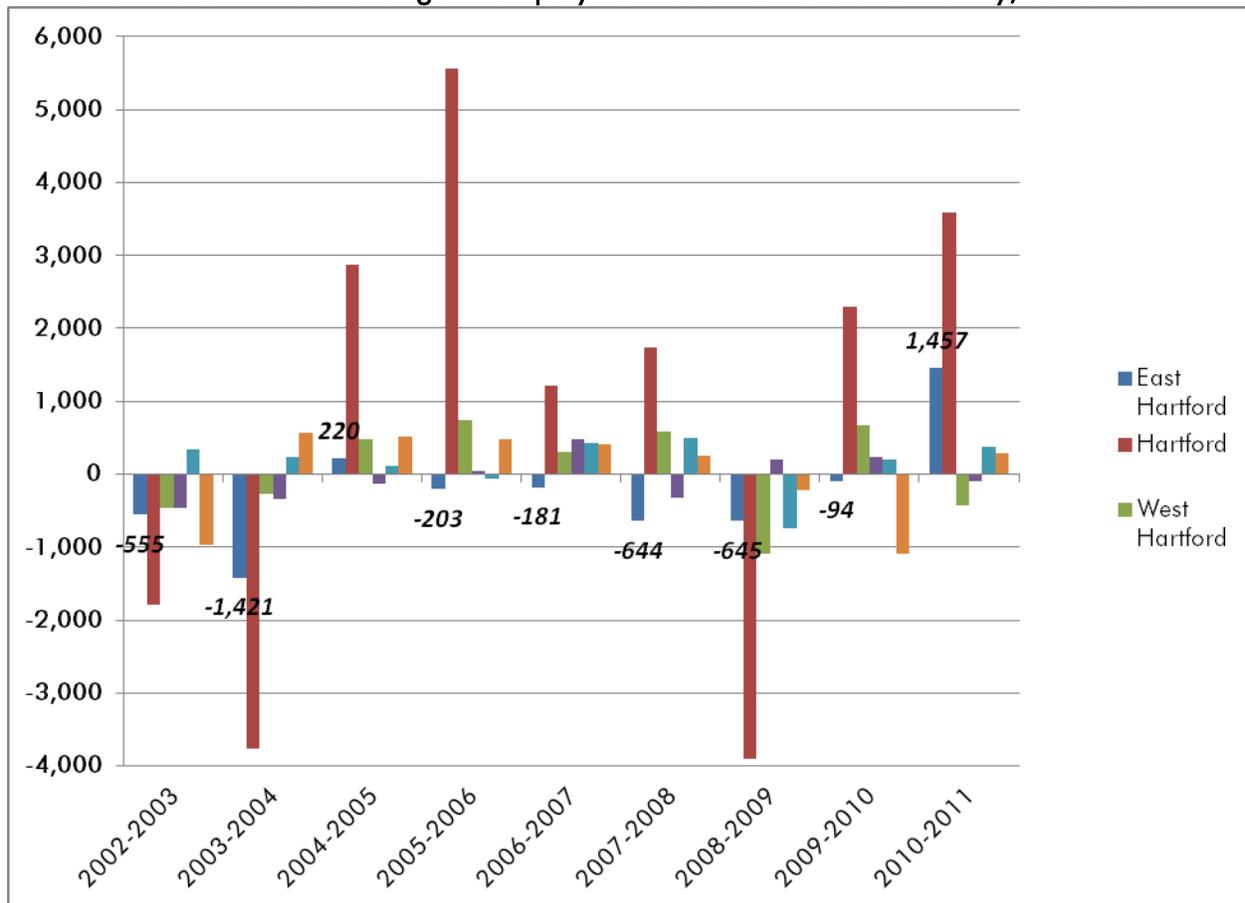
**Table 26: Employment in East Hartford and Vicinity, 2002-2011**

	East Hartford	Hartford	West Hartford	Manchester	Glastonbury	Newington
2002	32,474	113,527	27,184	9,930	8,560	16,769
2003	31,919	111,745	26,729	9,471	8,897	15,797
2004	30,498	107,984	26,466	9,125	9,129	16,356
2005	30,718	110,854	26,948	8,987	9,242	16,879
2006	30,515	116,410	27,692	9,038	9,174	17,365
2007	30,334	117,623	27,995	9,524	9,597	17,775
2008	29,690	119,357	28,583	9,197	10,097	18,035
2009	29,045	115,449	27,484	9,390	9,357	17,813
2010	28,951	117,748	28,161	9,620	9,564	16,722
2011	30,408	121,334	27,732	9,526	9,941	17,003
<b>Change</b>	<b>-2,066</b>	<b>7,807</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>-404</b>	<b>1,381</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>-6.4%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

As the table above shows, the number of jobs in East Hartford declined by 2,066 (6.4%) between 2002 and 2011, a greater decline than in any of the surrounding areas. More troubling, it was noted in the previous section that the number of East Hartford residents working in East Hartford had declined by more than 1,000 workers; thus, it can be inferred that half of the total job loss in East Hartford affected the town's residents.

Chart 10.3: Annual Change in Employment East Hartford and Vicinity, 2002-2011



Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

The employment loss in East Hartford did not happen all at one time with the closing of a single plant or firm. As seen in the chart above, East Hartford lost jobs each year since 2002, with the exception of 2005 and 2011. This is a departure from the surrounding municipalities, which had as many years of job gains as years with losses. While 2005 was a minor increase of 220 jobs, the gain of 1,457 jobs in 2011 was a much-needed step toward recovery. The following sections will look at the major employers in East Hartford for indications of where the losses and gains have occurred.

### 10.2.7 Major Employers

As shown in the table below, 15 employers provide 60% of East Hartford’s jobs as of 2011.

**Table 27: Top 15 Employers in East Hartford 2011: Jobs and Rankings, 2011, 2002**

Employer	2011			2002		
	Jobs	Rank	% Town Employment	Jobs	Rank	% Town Employment
Pratt & Whitney Aircraft	7,621	1	33.4%	7,200	1	30.8%
Town of East Hartford	1,714	2	7.5%	1,531	2	6.5%
Bank of America	550	3	2.4%	632	4	2.7%
Coca Cola Bottling Company	546	4	2.4%	134	10	0.6%
Goodwin College	483	5	2.1%	NA	NA	0.0%
United Technologies Research	477	6	2.1%	800	3	3.4%
Riverside Health Center	448	7	2.0%	425	5	1.8%
CT Dept. of Info. Technology	397	8	1.7%	NA	NA	0.0%
Cabela’s Outdoor Store	299	9	1.3%	NA	NA	0.0%
CSC Financial	297	10	1.3%	400	6	1.7%
Connecticut Natural Gas	270	11	1.2%	NA	NA	0.0%
BKM Total Office	224	12	1.0%	NA	NA	0.0%
CT Judicial Dept.	145	13	0.6%	NA	NA	0.0%
United Steel	127	14	0.6%	NA	NA	0.0%
Cellu-Tissue	98	15	0.4%	140	9	0.6%
Addressing Services	NA	NA	0.0%	330	7	1.4%
Air Touch Paging	NA	NA	0.0%	150	8	0.6%
ACCENT Color Sciences	NA	NA	0.0%	45	11	0.2%

Source: Town of East Hartford, Development Department

Over the past decade, Pratt & Whitney has remained the primary employer in East Hartford, employing 7,621 people, or providing 33.4% of the municipality’s total jobs in 2011. This is an increase of some 421 jobs, or 5.8%, since 2002. While the increasing number of jobs at Pratt & Whitney is obviously beneficial, the increased share of all jobs in East Hartford indicates a possible economic vulnerability.

The Town of East Hartford maintains its second-place rank in 2011, having added 183 jobs and increasing in share of employment from 6.5% in 2002 to 7.5% in 2011. The third-largest employer is Bank of America, which, although it cut almost 100 jobs from its local workforce, has actually gone up in rank from fourth to third over the course of the decade. The Coca Cola Bottling Company almost quadrupled its workforce and rose in the ranks from the tenth largest employer in 2002 to the fourth in 2011.

Seven of the 2011 top 15 employers did not rank at all in 2002, indicating that a great deal of change has taken place in the municipality over the last decade. One of these is fifth-ranked Goodwin College, which employs 483 people and provides 2.1% of all East Hartford's jobs. Other examples of this include the Connecticut Department of Information Technology (#8, 397 jobs); Cabela's Outdoor Store (#9, 299 jobs); Connecticut Natural Gas (#11, 270 jobs); BKM Total Office (#12, 224 jobs); the Connecticut Judicial Department (#13, 145 jobs); and finally, United Steel (#14, 123 jobs). Of these "new" businesses, it is notable that three are State of Connecticut facilities or utilities and two are major retailers.

Other notable changes include sixth-ranked United Technologies Research, which cut 323 jobs since 2002 and declined in rank from third place and in share from 3.4% of total employment to 2.1%, just behind Goodwin College. Riverside Health Center, while increasing employment slightly since 2002, dropped two points in the rankings to number seven in 2011.

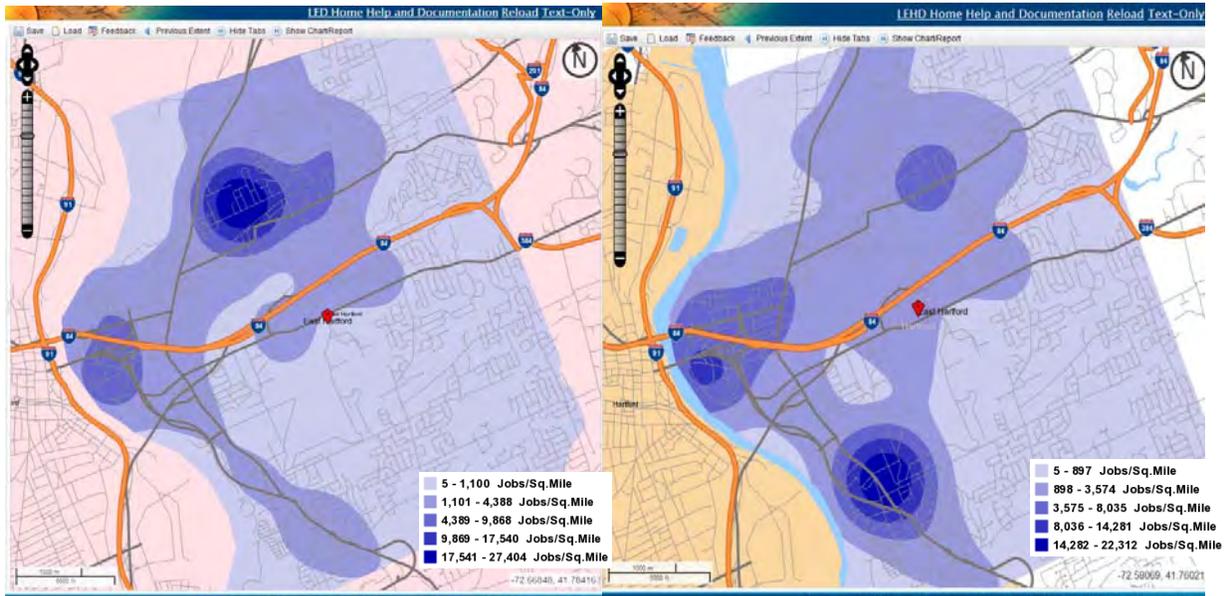
Three companies, Addressing Services, Air Touch Paging and ACCENT Color Sciences, which ranked seventh, eighth and eleventh, respectively, and employed a total of 525 people in 2002, did not make the top 15 employers list in 2011, either moving elsewhere or reducing staff to fewer than 98 employees.

### **10.2.8 Geographic Distribution**

Not only did the nature of jobs in East Hartford change, but the geographic distribution has changed as well. The figures below show the highest concentrations of jobs per square mile in 2002 and 2011. In 2002, employment followed the major highways, including 5, 44 and 2, with the greatest concentration of jobs in the fork at the intersection of Highways 5 and 44 and to a lesser extent at I-84 and 2 as they cross over into Hartford.

East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2002

East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2011



Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

By 2011, jobs had left that northern core, with only a small concentration along Highway 44. Meanwhile, the economic activity at the bridges had intensified, as it has all along the riverside, primarily reflecting increases in State and Goodwin College employment. However, the greatest job density is on Main Street where Pratt & Whitney and Coca-Cola Bottling are located.

10.2.9 Worker Profiles

East Hartford workers tend to be older than those in surrounding municipalities. As shown in the table that follows, a full 25% of East Hartford workers are 55 or older, the highest among neighboring municipalities. Along with having the greatest share of older workers, it also has a relatively small share of the youngest workers – those 29 or younger – at 17.2%. Only Hartford has smaller share of young workers (16%). The other surrounding towns (West Hartford, Manchester, Glastonbury and Newington) have much younger employees, with shares of the 29 and under cohort ranging from 23.3% in Manchester to 26.8% in Glastonbury.

Table 28: Age Distribution of Selected Area Workers, 2011

	East Hartford	Hartford	West Hartford	Manchester	Glastonbury	Newington
Age 29 or younger	5,219	19,410	6,692	2,223	2,663	4,021
Age 30 to 54	17,582	75,526	14,389	5,182	5,220	9,338
Age 55 or older	7,607	26,398	6,651	2,121	2,058	3,644
	<b>Percent of Total</b>					
Age 29 or younger	17.2%	16.0%	24.1%	23.3%	26.8%	23.6%
Age 30 to 54	57.8%	62.2%	51.9%	54.4%	52.5%	54.9%
Age 55 or older	25.0%	21.8%	24.0%	22.3%	20.7%	21.4%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

While the majority of workers in the area are in the 30 to 54 age cohort, that percentage is 57.8 in East Hartford, second only to Hartford at 62.2%. Meanwhile, Newington’s share in that age range, the next closest, is only 54.9%.

Going hand in hand with the generally older workforce, East Hartford workers tend to make more money than their counterparts in the surrounding areas. Only 14.8% of the jobs in East Hartford are minimum wage, with workers making \$1,250 per month or less. The majority, 62.1%, is in the highest paying category of More than \$3,333 per month – of course, the highest category includes all workers making \$40,000 per year or more. In these terms, only Hartford has a higher wage distribution with 65.4% of its workers being in the highest wage category.

**Table 29: Earnings Distribution of Selected Area Workers, 2011**

	East Hartford	Hartford	West Hartford	Manchester	Glastonbury	Newington
\$1,250 per month or less	14.8%	12.6%	28.4%	26.8%	27.6%	24.1%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	23.0%	22.0%	32.3%	34.1%	29.6%	29.4%
More than \$3,333 per month	62.1%	65.4%	39.3%	39.1%	42.7%	46.5%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

Looking at the historical data since 2002, as displayed in the following chart, the largest share of East Hartford jobs has always been in the highest wage category; however the share and number of those making higher wages has continued to grow in absolute terms even though the number of total jobs has decreased.

**Chart 12: Earnings Distribution of East Hartford Workers, 2002-2011**



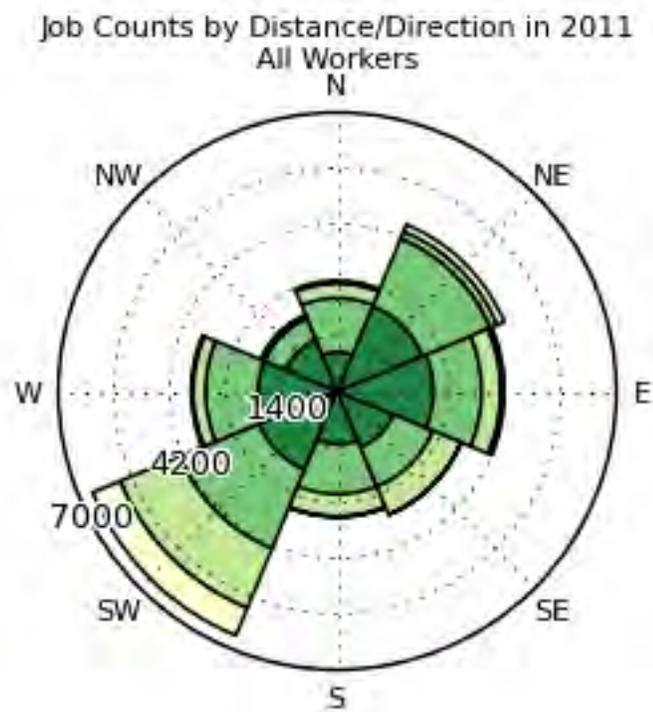
Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

### 10.2.10 Origins of East Hartford Workers

According to the CES, of the 30,408 jobs in East Hartford in 2011, only 3,216, or 10.6%, are held by East Hartford residents. As shown in the chart and table below, East Hartford workers come from very widespread origins; the share from the top nine places of origin total only one third of all workers.

Table 30: Origins of East Hartford Workers, 2011

Top Ten Places of Residence of East Hartford Workers		
East Hartford	3,216	10.6%
Hartford	1,949	6.4%
West Hartford	1,038	3.4%
Manchester	986	3.2%
New Britain	728	2.4%
Bristol	625	2.1%
Middletown	566	1.9%
Wethersfield	530	1.7%
Newington	519	1.7%
All Other	20,251	66.6%
Distance Traveled to Work in East Hartford (colors correspond to radar map)		
Less than 10 miles	14,100	46.4%
10 to 24 miles	10,784	35.5%
25 to 50 miles	4,336	14.3%
Greater than 50 miles	1,188	3.9%



So

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

Fewer than half (46.4%) of all workers travel less than 10 miles to work every day. One in three travel between 10 and 25 miles to work, while 14.3% travel between 25 and 50 miles and 3.9% or 1,188 travel more than 50 miles to work in East Hartford – most of whom travel from the southwest, and likely by car. These travel patterns not only indicate a labor gap in East Hartford, but also have implications on commutation and traffic.

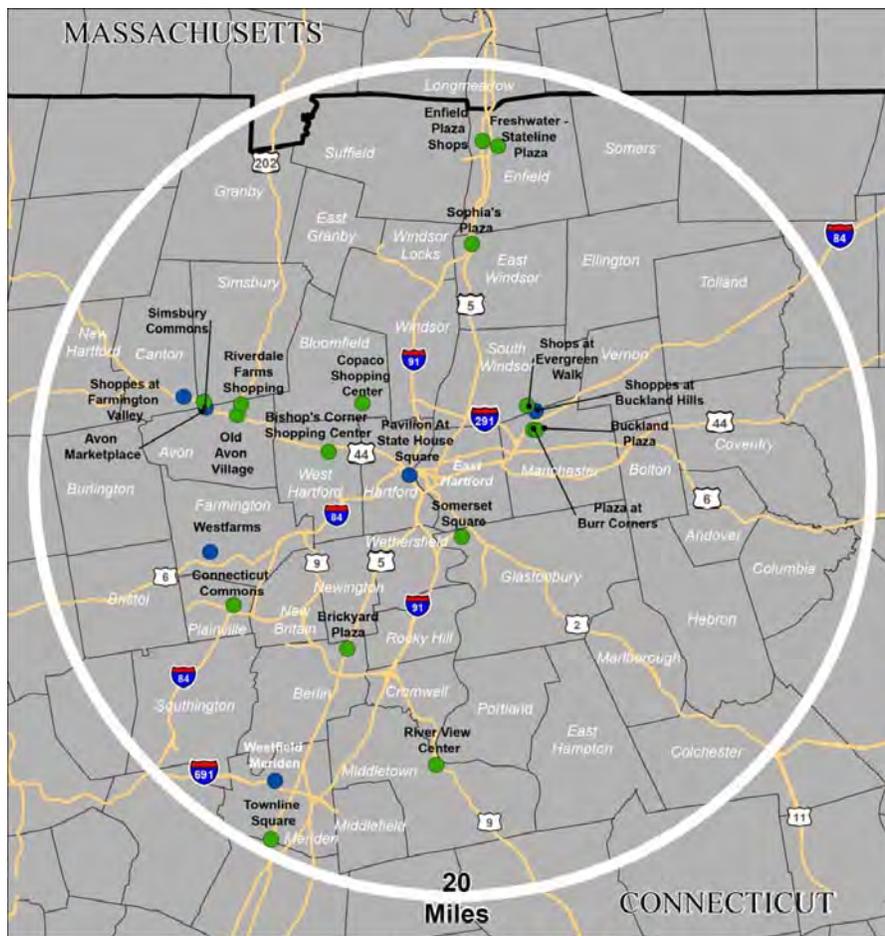
### 10.2.11 Commercial Areas

As discussed in Chapter 3, East Hartford has a small portion of land devoted to commercial land use, comprising just 4% of the town’s land area. While this trend has remained fairly stable for a

number of years – commercial land use represented nearly 4% of land area in the 1990 POCD and about 6% in the 2003 POCD – the nature of commercial uses has changed. On Silver Lane, the formerly enclosed Charter Oak Mall has been replaced by a strip mall, while other smaller-scale strip development has located along that corridor and others such as Main Street and Burnside Avenue. The condition of this development varies, with newly built, standalone buildings faring relatively well, and older strip centers experiencing high vacancy rates and in need of upgrades. The northern portion of town recently lost its only grocery store.

The limited commercial areas in East Hartford suggest that its residents are traveling elsewhere for many of their shopping or dining needs; in fact, Figure 10.11 shows that the town’s residents have a number of large-scale shopping centers within short driving distance. In considering future development or redevelopment of retail uses in town (such as at Rentschler Field), their success will largely depend on filling an appropriate niche, to offer shoppers something they cannot obtain elsewhere in the vicinity.

Figure 27: Shopping Centers in the Region



Major Retail Centers Within 20 Miles of East Hartford

**By Type**

- Enclosed Shopping Mall
- Unenclosed Shopping Plaza

— US and Interstate Highways

■ Cities and Towns

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles

N

### **10.3 Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the above discussion of existing conditions, this section recommends some items to be considered through Town action or further study.

#### **10.3.1 Build on key assets for greater economic vitality.**

As described in greater detail in Chapter 11, East Hartford contains several important growth areas that are critical to its long-term economic picture: Founders Plaza, the Silver Lane/Rentschler Field area and the south Main Street/Goodwin College area. Each of these represent major assets for the town, and fully capturing their potential and connecting them to each other and to the rest of East Hartford will generate much-needed economic activity.

Another significant asset that the Town can build upon is its central business district, which includes many activity nodes, such as municipal functions, historic properties and parks. Additional mixed-use infill development should be encouraged in this area, with a focus on Main Street as a major commercial node. Adaptive re-use of historic structures should also be facilitated to increase the value of these properties while preserving their character.

East Hartford also has a substantial untapped resource in its Connecticut River waterfront. Portions of the riverfront are well-used, such as Great River Park, but others are greatly underutilized or not accessible by the public. Enhanced access to the town's waterfront would represent a significant improvement in quality of life for many town residents, increasing neighborhood amenities and transforming more areas into neighborhoods of choice. This improved quality of life would serve the twin goals of increasing property values and attracting new residents to East Hartford, both of which would raise the town's tax base and thus increase its fiscal capacity. Recreational uses are not only a nicety for existing East Hartford residents; they can also spawn commercial development and are a major draw for residential development.

#### **10.3.2 Strengthen economic competitiveness to attract, create and retain jobs.**

This chapter indicates that many of East Hartford's economic issues stem from its need for more diverse and high-paying jobs. One key factor in improving the jobs picture is keeping and supporting existing businesses. Many of these enterprises may wish to expand but cannot find the right space to suit their needs, or struggle with the legal and contractual hurdles involved in expansion. The Town should facilitate redevelopment of strategic areas with warehouses and other retrofitted space that meets the needs of businesses seeking to expand or relocate. In addition, East Hartford should implement outreach and training programs for minority and small businesses in terms of legal and fiscal requirements of ownership. Outreach and communication to existing businesses should be strengthened – perhaps through in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce – to ensure that their ongoing needs are being addressed and to assist in expansion or relocation opportunities.

In order to ensure that more of the jobs located in East Hartford are held by residents of the town, the skills of residents must match those needed by prospective employers. Many industries remaining in town require specialized technical training and computer skills not only for office jobs, but for smart-technology industry as well. Better preparation of East Hartford's workforce must start by understanding what skills its residents need to compete for existing and future jobs. It is recommended that the Town, working with a specialized consultant, undertake a separate skillset analysis to determine where skill mismatches may be occurring. With that information, the Town could work with the public schools system as well as private-sector representatives such as charter schools, Goodwin College and major employers on crafting educational and industrial training programs to enhance the competitiveness of East Hartford's workforce.

### **10.3.3 Reinforce existing neighborhoods and create new neighborhoods of choice.**

Improving the business climate and worker training will only go so far to allow East Hartford to reach its full potential. The town's image is not as positive as it could be, and the highest wage earnings working in East Hartford tend to live elsewhere. The town needs to become a place where people of all demographic levels want to live. This means creating diverse housing options throughout the town, developing neighborhood commerce to include local convenience retail and maintaining community facilities to adequately serve their neighborhoods.

As detailed in Chapter 8, East Hartford has a large amount of affordable and publicly subsidized housing, which is clearly vital to serve the needs of many of its residents. However, this Plan recommends a greater share of medium- and high-income housing in order to increase the Town's fiscal capacity by improving the tax base. Such growth in the diversity of housing would create a "housing ladder" for East Hartford residents, so that as their incomes increase, they will have a range of housing options to induce them to stay in the town. Encouraging housing diversity is not intended to adversely affect the character of East Hartford's existing neighborhoods, but to enhance it, by fostering a blend of affordable, workforce and higher-end housing options at different densities throughout the town. By creating a more balanced mix, the Town will be able to provide better services, and potentially bring its mill rate down.



## **11.0 SPECIAL STUDY AREAS**

### **11.1 Introduction**

This chapter takes a closer look at several key planning areas that are critical to East Hartford's future: the Founders Plaza/riverfront area, the south Main Street area around Goodwin College and the Rentschler Field/Silver Lane area. In each of these locations, redevelopment and activity has begun to take shape, but a greater focus is needed for the areas to reach their potential to truly transform East Hartford. This chapter seeks to identify issues, opportunities and strategies for each study area, based on public and stakeholder input, site analysis and direction from Town staff and leadership.

### **11.2 Founders Plaza/Riverfront**

Since the seminal Riverfront Recapture plan was completed in the early 1980s, the Connecticut riverfront has been the focus of significant public interest, not only for its recreation potential, but also for its importance as an amenity adding value to adjacent development sites. While much of this focus has been in the City of Hartford, the Town of East Hartford has also experienced benefits, including the creation of Great River Park and a strong pedestrian link over the Founders Bridge; construction of the Riverpoint residential tower and development of major commercial tenants including offices and a hotel.

The 1990 and 2003 POCDs, as well as other prior planning studies, devoted specific attention to the Founders Plaza/riverfront area, noting its great potential for economic development and enhanced waterfront access. As part of the current POCD, the following analysis was conducted to evaluate potential development opportunities in the Founders Plaza/riverfront area. The analysis includes a description of existing conditions and a conceptual plan illustrating infill development opportunities with the objective of creating a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use center on this large tract of land adjacent to the Connecticut River.

Founders Plaza primary study area includes the block of property bounded by Pitkin Street to the north, Meadow Street to the east, Hartland Street to the south, and East River Drive to the west (see Figure 28). A secondary study area was examined, which includes the portion of Great River Park north of the boat launch/parking lot east of East River Drive and north of Hartland Street. The primary study area encompasses approximately 28.9 acres and includes six parcels ranging in size from approximately 1.0 acres to 18.9 acres (see Table 31). Presently, all but one parcel, which is an officially mapped road, have active commercial uses including offices and a hotel (see Figure 29).

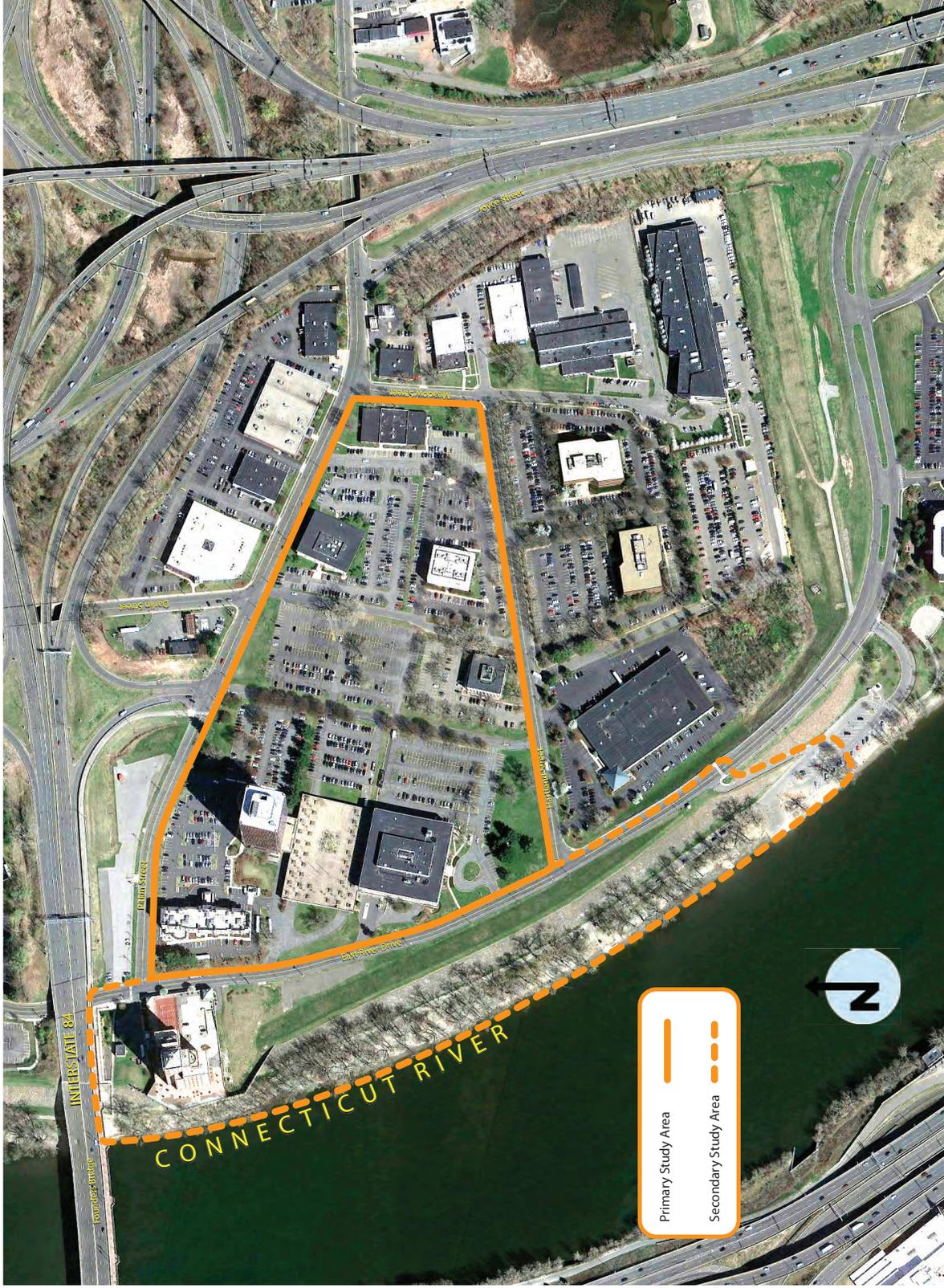


FIGURE 28: FOUNDERS PLAZA - AERIAL

Source: Google Earth, BFJ Planning

Figure 29: Founders Plaza - Buildings



Due to recent economic conditions and the regional real estate market, Founders Plaza remains significantly underutilized. As Figure 30 shows, most of the area is characterized by mid- to high-rise commercial/office buildings surrounding by surface and some structured parking. An analysis of existing buildings suggests that the study area exhibits extremely low density and has capacity for additional infill development. Presently, estimated floor area ratios range from 0.24 to 0.60, based on the size of the parcels and the amount of space taken up by parking areas, and an overall study area FAR of 0.50 (see Table 31).

As the table suggests, approximately half of the study area is dedicated to surface parking. A visual survey of these lots suggests that many of the larger parking areas are underutilized. As indicated in Figure 31, the utilization of these parking areas varies, with some of the larger lots found to be empty by as much as 80% to 90%, while others are used near to capacity. Of note, the largest parking areas, which are located in the center of the study area, were observed to be the most underutilized, with vegetation growing up through the asphalt. The parking structure at the west-central portion of the study area appears to have ample capacity, suggesting that many users park in the adjacent surface lots for convenience.

**Table 31: Summary of Study Area Parcels**

Reference	Name	Area (acres)	Approx. Bldg. Area (SF)	Approx. Parking Area (SF) [Percentage of Site Area]	Approx. FAR
A	Founders Plaza (Main)	18.9	490,000	416,000 (+ 65,000 FP parking garage) [0.52]	0.60
B	155 Founders Plaza	3.24	60,000	90,000 [0.64]	0.43
C	225 Pitkin Street	1.65	17,500	17,500 [0.24]	0.24
D	60 Hartland Street	2.54	44,000	87,500 [0.79]	0.40
E	50 Founders Plaza	1.52	20,000	40,000 [0.60]	0.30
F	Mapped R.O.W.	1.02	N/A	N/A	0.00
<b>SITE TOTALS</b>		<b>28.9</b>	<b>631,840</b>	<b>666,350 [0.53]</b>	<b>0.50</b>

As Figure 32 shows, the perimeter of the site has a strong pedestrian circulation system with sidewalks in good condition, but breaks in that network (e.g. missing sidewalks and crosswalks) impede connections beyond the site. For example, connections to the waterfront and Founders' Bridge could be improved as presently this route is difficult to navigate and not clearly marked. Contributing to this is the presence of the flood control berm that protects and separates the site from the river. As a result, access to the waterfront (i.e. Great River Park) from Founders Plaza involves a circuitous route to the south. Pedestrian circulation within Founders Plaza is extremely limited as there are no sidewalks internally to the site. As shown in Figure 32, pedestrian access from the perimeter into Founders Plaza is provided in three locations only, and none of these connect. As a result, the site is comprised mainly of a series of disconnected parking lots.

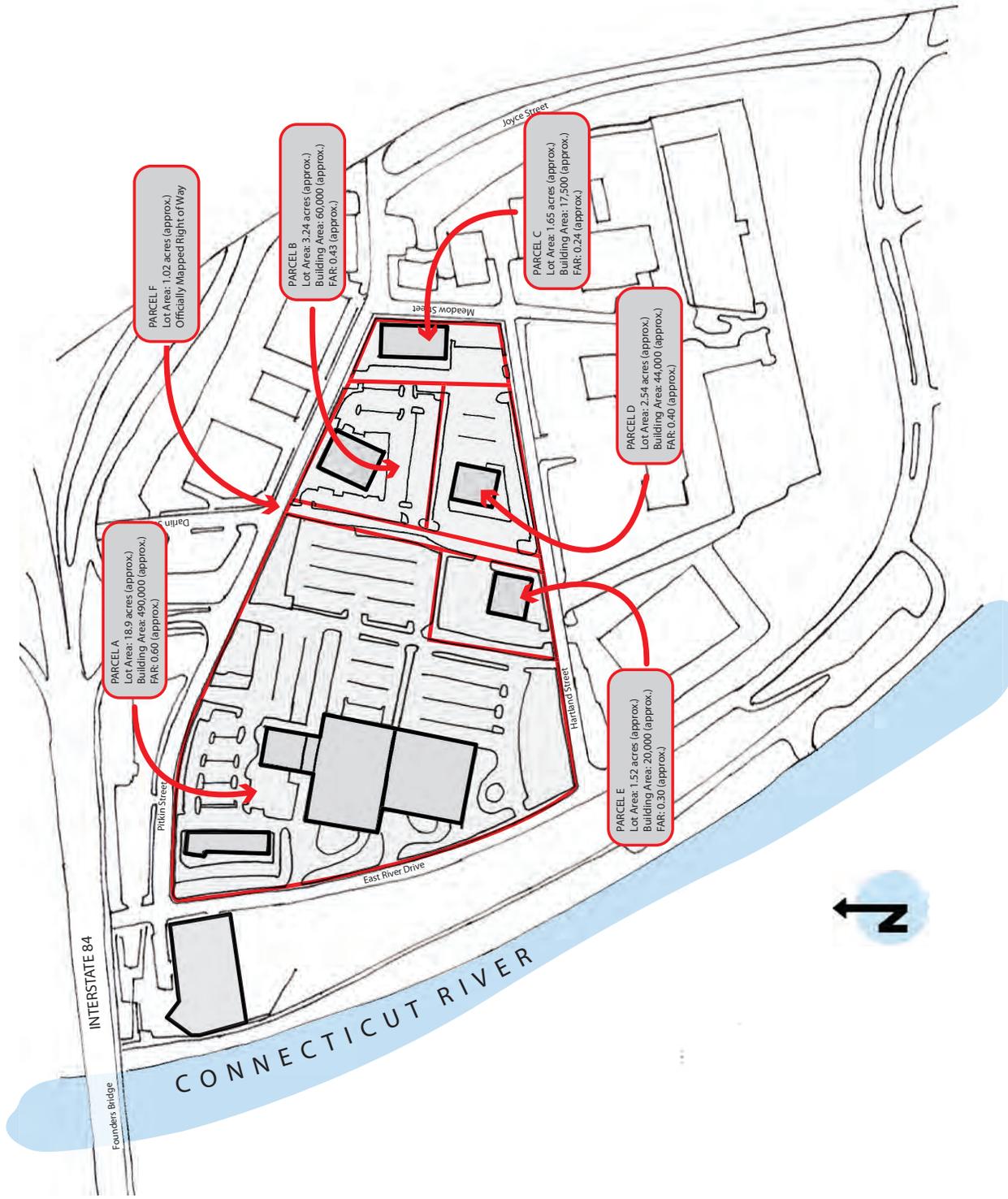


FIGURE 30: FOUNDERS PLAZA - PROPERTY LINES AND EXISTING FAR

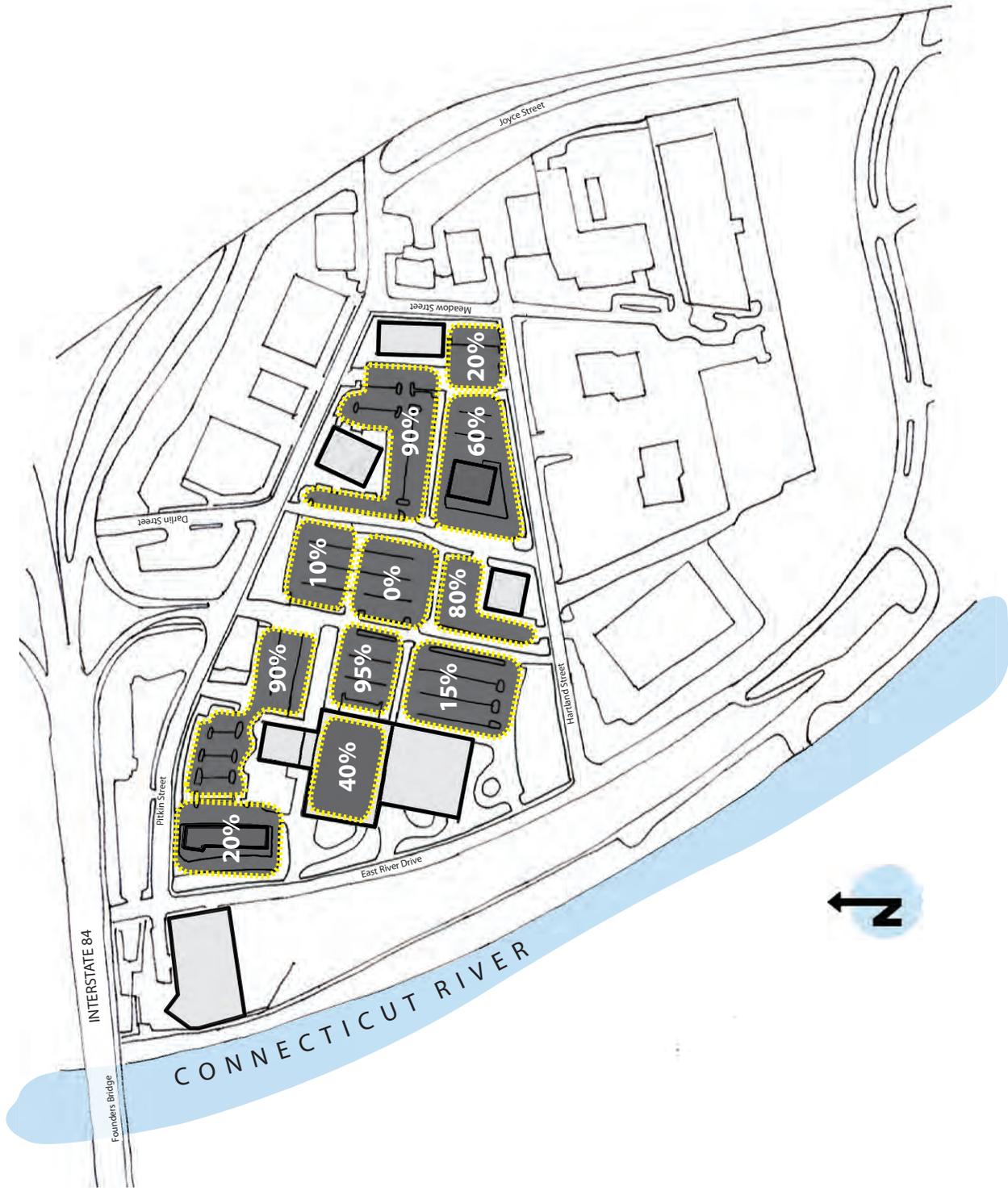


FIGURE 31: FOUNDERS PLAZA - PARKING UTILIZATION

Source: BFJ Planning

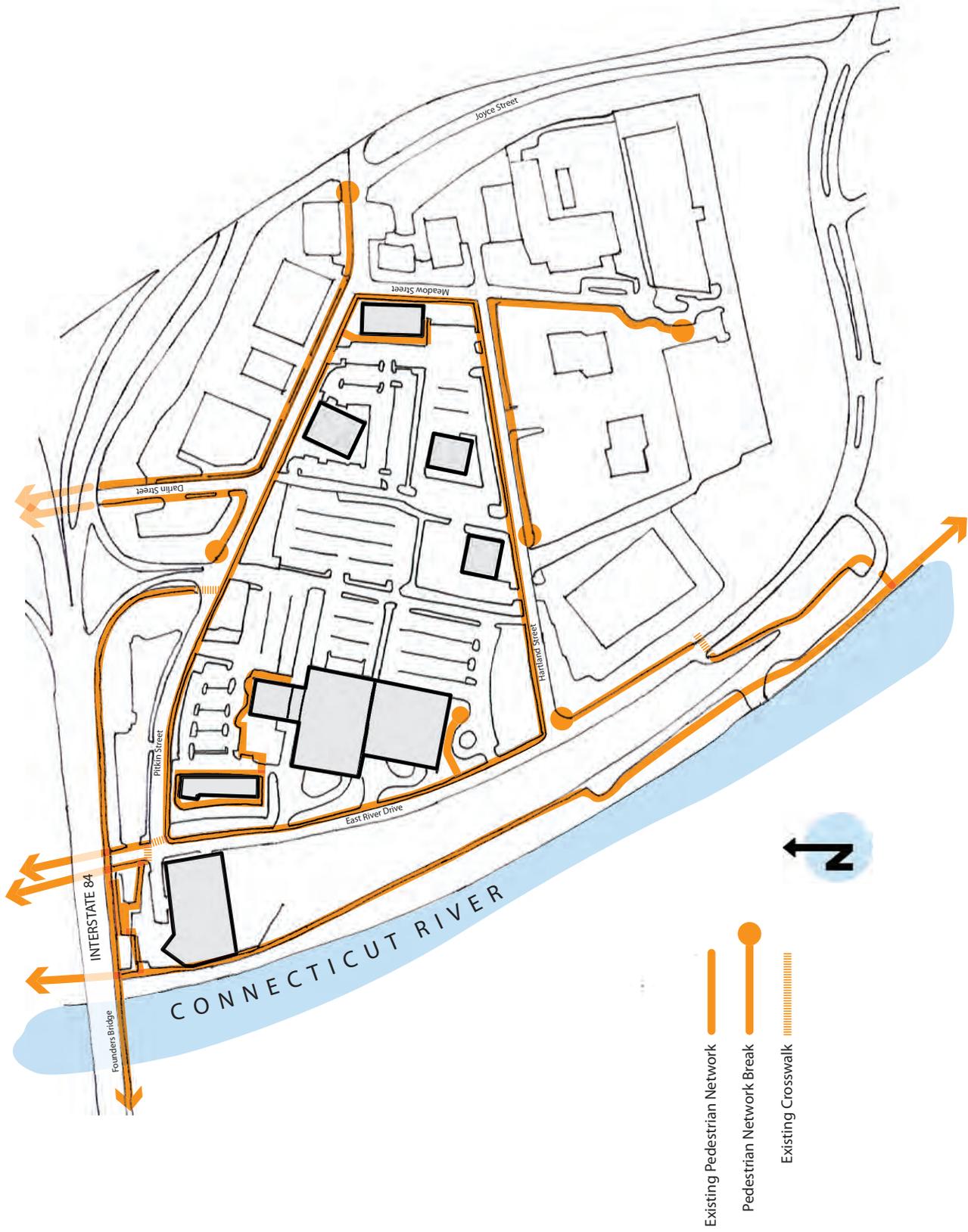


FIGURE 32: FOUNDERS PLAZA - EXISTING PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The site is well served by transit (bus service) and by an external network of surface streets connecting it to adjacent areas in the town. Primary vehicular access is provided from the east via Pitkin Street, from the south via East River Drive and from the north via Darlin Street. Access from the west is provided via I-84. While numerous driveways provide vehicular access, two main entrances to the site (one on the north and one the south) were identified in relation to the existing street network (see Figure 33). These points align with an existing internal north-south roadway that is distinguished by an allée of mature growth trees that line both sides of the roadway (see image below). These locations make possible the creation of gateways as formal entrances to the western portion of the site from Pitkin and Hartland Streets. On the eastern portion of the site, north-south access to the site is provided via an existing mapped public street. Presently, this right-of-way remains undeveloped and therefore functions more as extension to the existing internal network of parking lots. Apart from this mapped street, internal vehicular circulation, however, is severely curtailed due to the lack of an articulated network of roadways, and by numerous card-access gates or placed jersey-barriers that further restrict travel.



**Allée of trees lining the primary north-south internal roadway (presently closed to traffic) in Founders Plaza.**

*BFJ Planning*

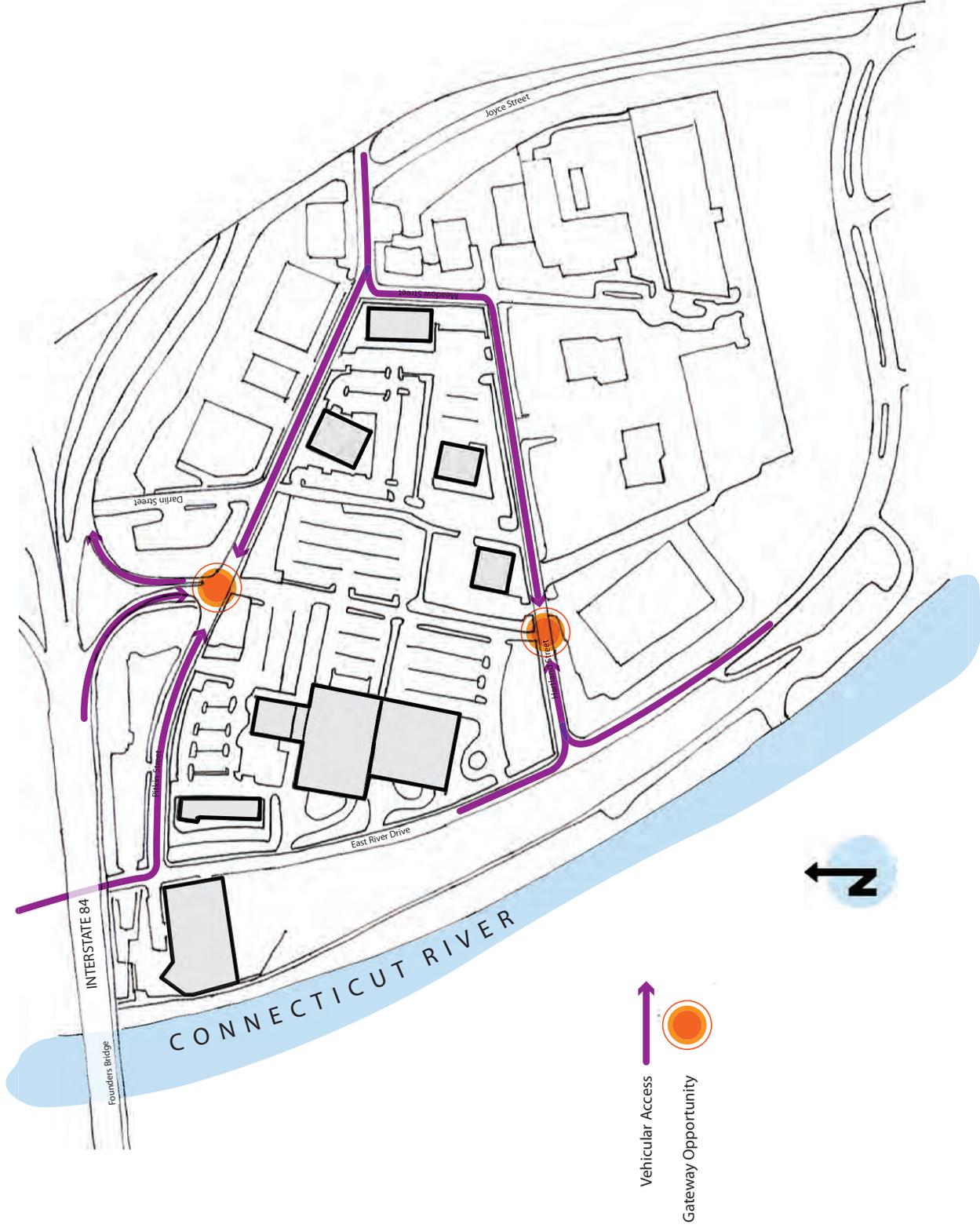


FIGURE 33: FOUNDERS PLAZA - VEHICULAR ACCESS

Figure 34 summarizes the discussion points above and presents issues and opportunities for the study area, as follows:

- Underutilized parking areas in the center-west area of the site provide potential opportunities for new development.
- Existing green and open spaces occur mainly on the perimeter of the site. These should be preserved and function as part of a larger green/open space network on the site.
- The existing allee of mature trees along the closed north-south roadway on the site should be preserved. This roadway provides potential to create the spine of a formal internal circulation network on the site.
- Gateways to the site should be created on the north and south of this roadway where it intersects Pitkin and Hartland Streets.
- There exists a strong pedestrian and vehicular circulation network along the perimeter of the site connecting it to other parts of East Hartford, but poor internal vehicular and non-existent pedestrian networks impede internal circulation on the site.
- The flood control berm constrains access to the waterfront and Great River Park but, if rethought, presents a valuable design opportunity to link the waterfront and Founders' Bridge to the site, and that this link could be used to extend the green network from the waterfront into the study site. Redesigning the wide crest of the berm could also provide views and an opportunity to place a public amenity or focal point along the waterfront.

Responding to the information presented above, Figure 35 and Figure 36 present a concept plan for infill development of Founders Plaza. The primary objectives of the concept plan are to allow for new mixed-use infill development, improve access to and circulation within the site, make a stronger connection to the waterfront, and create an urban place with an identifiable center through the use of publicly-accessible open space.

Figure 35 shows the main features of the concept design. These include opening up the primary north-south tree-lined roadway to traffic and placing a new building on the underutilized parking lots to the east of the roadway. The building is conceived as mixed-use with a mid-rise podium that has active uses along the frontage and a higher-rise tower above the podium. The roadway would be enhanced by creating formal gateways where it intersects Pitkin Street (to the north) and Hartland Street (to the south). These gateways would employ landscaping, improved crosswalks, lighting and signage. In front of the proposed mixed-use building, a central green could be created with a restaurant/convenience retail pavilion to serve existing professional and potential future residential populations. This green and the surrounding buildings would constitute a real center for Founders Plaza, providing activity at the ground floor, including destination restaurants and the like to attract shoppers and visitors. As shown in the figures, the green including the roadways that surround it are approximately the same scale as Somerset Square in Glastonbury (see Figure 36), a place that functions in much the same way. From an urban design perspective, creating a central green (as an identifiable center) becomes an important organizing element around which existing buildings and other potential long-term future development sites to the west and south of the green might be organized (as shown in Figure 34). The green also

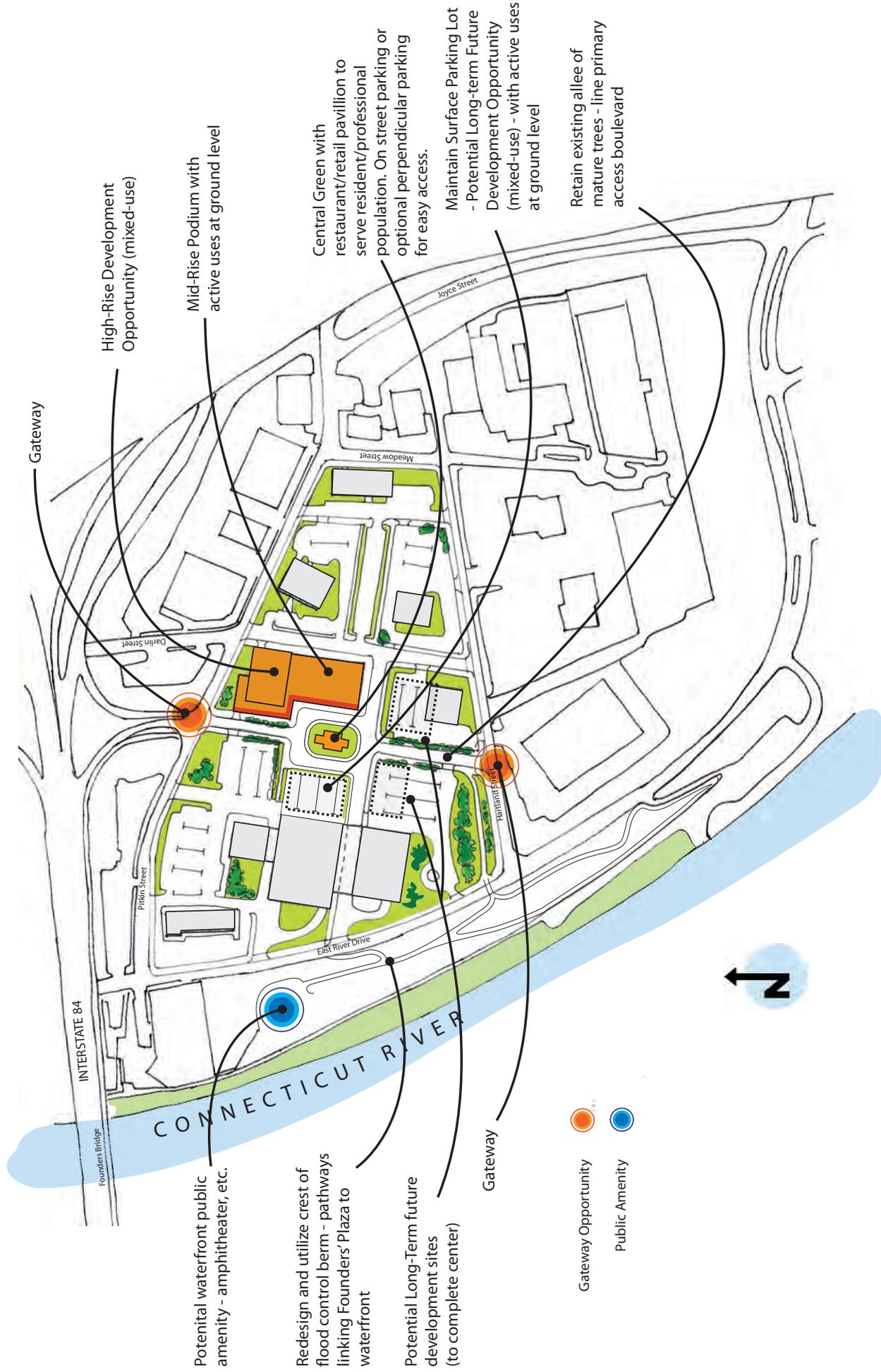
becomes an organizing element for pedestrian and vehicular circulation networks. As shown in Figure 35, the existing internal collection driveways serving various properties independently could be linked (and modified to include sidewalks) to provide both vehicular and pedestrian circulation east-west between properties. Completing crosswalks and providing pedestrian access points at key locations as shown in Figure 35 would further provide linkages to the external pedestrian network.

Once such an internal circulation network is created, the case to link Founders Plaza to the waterfront becomes much stronger. As shown in Figure 35, this could be accomplished by extending pathways up the slopes of the flood control berm. The sides of the berm are not too steep to preclude pathways, and the top of the berm could be redesigned to provide a walkway on its wide crest with sitting areas to capture impressive views of the Connecticut River, Hartford and back to Founders Plaza. Considering this possibility opens up another: creating a potential waterfront public amenity towards the north end of the berm, smaller in scale but mirroring Mortensen Riverfront Plaza across the river in Hartford. Finally, creating a larger network of green spaces that would not only help knit Founders Plaza to Great River Park, but would also provide existing workers (and potentially future residents) access to much needed open space.



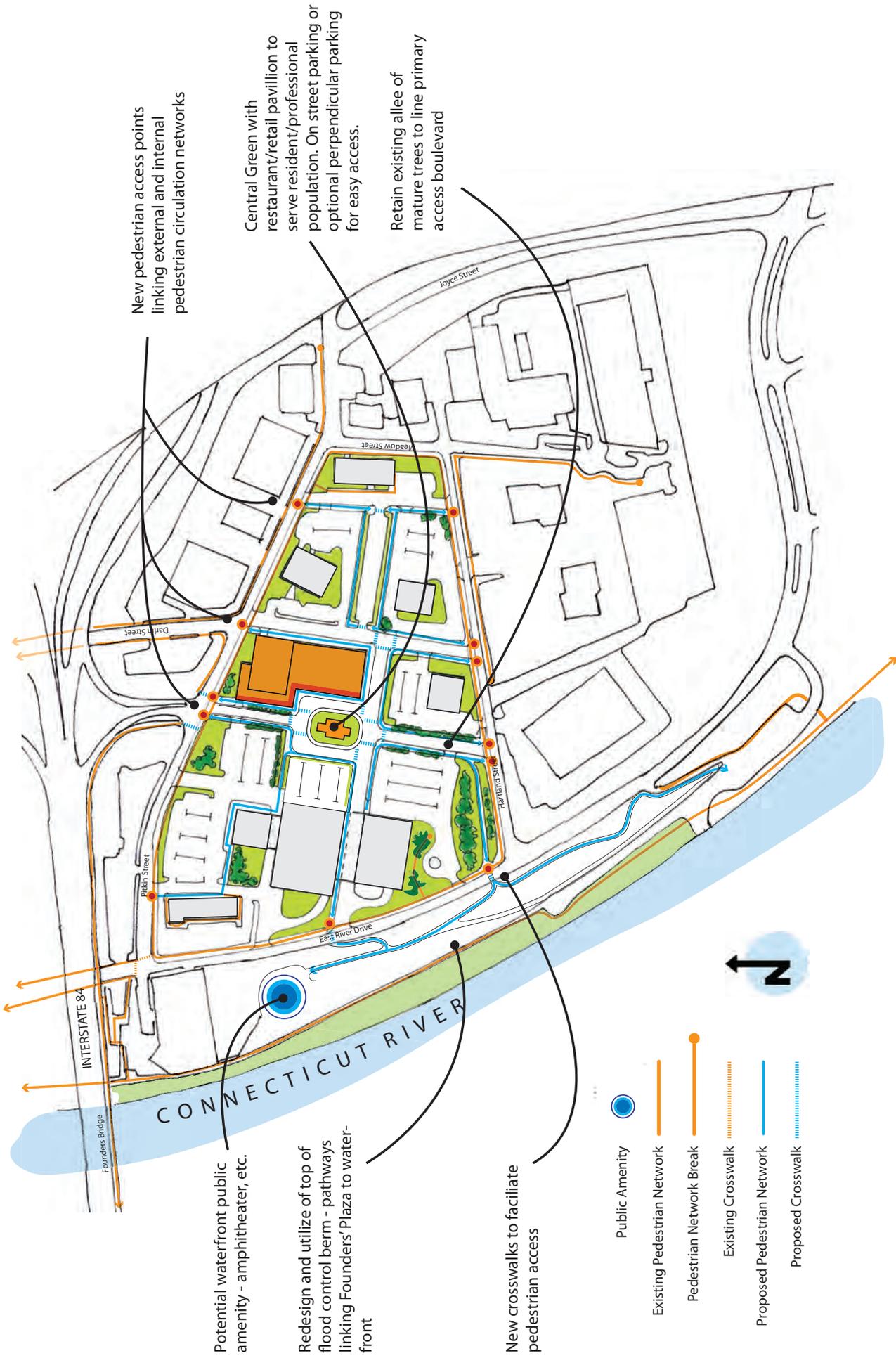
**Views from the top of the flood control berm between Great River Park and Founders Plaza.**  
*BFJ Planning*





PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

FIGURE 35: FOUNDERS PLAZA - DESIGN CONCEPT



New pedestrian access points linking external and internal pedestrian circulation networks

Central Green with restaurant/retail pavillion to serve resident/professional population. On street parking or optional perpendicular parking for easy access.

Retain existing allee of mature trees to line primary access boulevard

Potential waterfront public amenity - amphitheater, etc.

Redesign and utilize of top of flood control berm - pathways linking Founders Plaza to waterfront

New crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian access

- Public Amenity
- Existing Pedestrian Network
- Pedestrian Network Break
- Existing Crosswalk
- Proposed Pedestrian Network
- Proposed Crosswalk

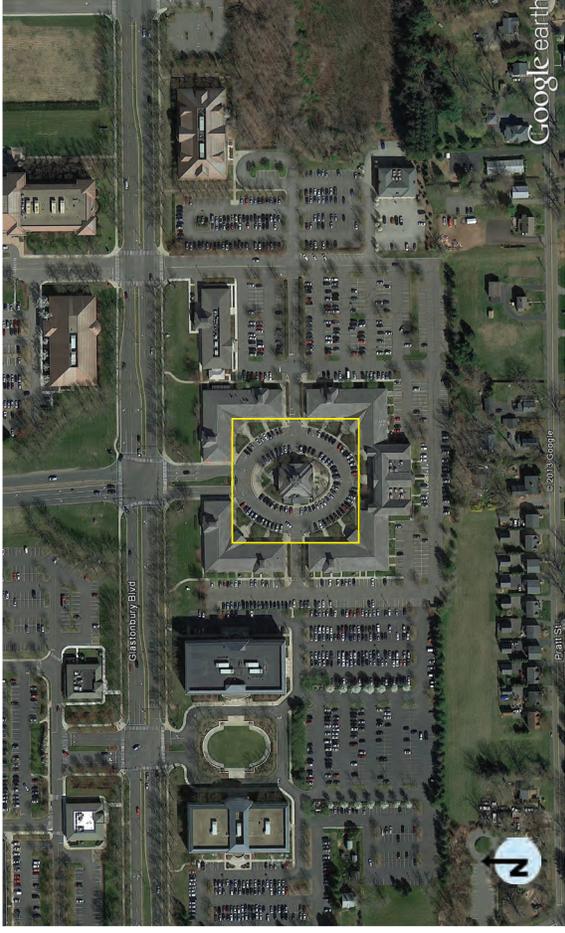


FIGURE 36: FOUNDERS PLAZA - DESIGN CONCEPT - CONNECTIVITY DIAGRAM

# SCALE COMPARISON



FOUNDERS PLAZA, East Hartford, CT



GLASTONBURY BLVD. (Shops at Somerset Square), Glastonbury, CT

While conceptual, this plan illustrates the great potential Founders Plaza offers East Hartford in creating a world-class mixed-use waterfront development. Presently the site functions a collection of adjacent but essentially unrelated and mostly inaccessible sites, many of which are significantly underutilized. Such a plan would require a more focused planning effort involving cooperation from all property owners, the city, and related agencies. New zoning would also be required to provide necessary flexibility to develop an attainable master plan for the site and allow for mixed-uses, but these objectives could be accomplished through the Town's existing Design Development District 1. This district has been mapped on Rentschler Field and several other parcels along the southern riverfront area, corresponding to Goodwin College.

### 11.3 South Main Street/College District

#### 11.3.1 Existing Conditions

The southern portion of Main Street has rapidly transformed since the 2003 POCD with the arrival and expansion of Goodwin College. In late 2008, the college opened its 110,000-square foot main campus building on Riverside Drive along the Connecticut River. Other development around this site included a brownfields remediation project, acquisition and clean-up of properties on Riverside Drive and reconstruction of the roadway itself. Recently, Goodwin College's projects have included construction of the Academy for Advanced Design and Technology Magnet School on Pent Road and the Connecticut River Academy Magnet High School (with associated incubator space) on Riverside Drive; conversion of commercial buildings on Main Street to academic and administrative use; and acquisition/rehabilitation of residential properties between Route 2 and Main Street, especially along Ensign Street. The college now owns most of the land in the study area (Figure 38).

Along the riverfront, educational uses now predominate, with the Willgoos site, which is currently zoned I-3, standing out as a significant redevelopment opportunity. Other waterfront uses include a restaurant, a rowing club facility and an electric substation. Between Route 2 and Main Street, the land use is primarily low- to medium-density residential, with the Willowbrook Early Childhood Center and its associated open space representing an important community use. Two



Goodwin College main building, above, and Connecticut River Academy Magnet High School under construction. below.



key multifamily sites are also in this area: the 80-unit King Court affordable housing facility, recently purchased by Goodwin College from the State, and the private Carriage Park condominium complex. Both low-density and multifamily residential uses are generally in good condition. The western side of Main Street is characterized by small- to medium-scaled commercial uses, typically with large areas of surface parking to the front and side of the buildings. Several of these properties have been acquired by the college for use as either school-related functions or for ancillary purposes. Open space resources along Main Street consist of Hockanum Cemetery and a small community garden (owned by the college).

Zoning in the study area encompasses a range of districts. Properties fronting Main Street are zoned B-2, while the area between Main Street and Route 2 is mapped either R-4 or R-5, as consistent with current land uses. The land area covering the main Goodwin College campus, the Academy for Advanced Design and Technology Magnet School and the Connecticut River Academy Magnet High School is designated under the DDD-1 floating zone. However, the rest of the riverfront land area is zoned I-3, the Town's heavy industrial zone, reflecting the area's historic manufacturing use.

### 11.3.2 Issues and Opportunities

Goodwin College's expansion in the southern portion of East Hartford has clearly benefited the town. Formerly industrial land with significant environmental contamination issues has been returned to a beneficial use. The riverfront has been redeveloped with architecturally distinctive buildings that have the potential to improve the town's image, and public waterfront access has been created. New educational uses provide more school choices for residents throughout the region. The college's expansion has helped to strengthen a key residential area, as well as activate and beautify Main Street.



**New riverfront access at Goodwin College.**  
*BFJ Planning*

This growth presents challenges as well as opportunities. In the current fiscal environment, the conversion of previously taxable property to a non-profit use is a change to be considered carefully. The Town must ensure that the positive impacts generated by the college are not outweighed by the loss of ratables and impacts on municipal services. In addition, any significant redevelopment of property along the Connecticut River has the potential to "privatize" the waterfront, cutting it off from the rest of East Hartford. Finally, a substantial conversion of Main Street's retail-oriented properties to single office use, while possibly improving aesthetics in the short-term, could shift the corridor's traditional character and reduce street-level activity, which is vital to remaining businesses.



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FIGURE 38: GOODWIN COLLEGE - LAND OWNERSHIP

The college is well aware of these concerns, and has indicated that it desires to work with the Town to further mutually beneficial economic development goals such as increasing tax revenues, enhancing the visual environment and providing services to the larger community. However, communication between the institution and the Town – as well as with the public as a whole – could be improved. Community feedback during this planning process indicated general public support for Goodwin College, but little awareness or knowledge of its long-term plans.

One way to address this communication gap would be for the college to amend its approved Master Plan to incorporate its more recent land acquisitions and long-term objectives. Issues to be addressed in the amended plan would include future development along the Riverside Drive waterfront area, redevelopment along Main Street and plans for the existing residential area centered on Ensign Street. In connection with an amendment to the Master Plan, all of the college’s property – as well as additional parcels under the consent of applicable landowners – could be brought into the DDD-1 zone to ensure that future development and redevelopment is undertaken in a comprehensive way. Some elements of an amended Master Plan that the Town should consider include (see Figure 39):

**1. Improving vehicular and pedestrian connectivity**

Route 2 creates a visual and physical barrier for much of the Goodwin College/south Main Street area, separating the campus and waterfront area from the adjacent neighborhood and commercial corridor. The only access points across Route 2 are Willow and Ensign streets, and Riverside Drive essentially ends at the college’s parking lot south of Ensign. To provide for better overall circulation, Riverside Drive should be extended southward to connect with Pent Road, for additional access to Main Street and Route 2 via High Street. In addition, Ensign Street, as the logical “main entrance” to the Goodwin College waterfront area, should be improved with sidewalks and streetscaping amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience and induce people to walk under Route 2.

**2. Preserving the overall commercial nature of Main Street**

Main Street serves as one of East Hartford’s important commercial corridors. While a healthy range of uses should be encouraged here, the general active commercial character of the street should be maintained. To the greatest extent practicable, retail, restaurant and personal-service uses should be on the ground floor of buildings, with office and residential uses located on upper floors (see Chapter 3 for relevant zoning recommendations). This is to the college’s benefit, as it would provide shopping, dining and service amenities for students, faculty and staff. Further enlivening the southern portion of Main Street would also help to create a link to future activity at Rentschler Field, while also building on the successful development just across the Glastonbury town line.

### 3. Retaining the residential character of the existing neighborhood

The residential neighborhood between Route 2 and Main Street is a fairly stable area with excellent access to major employers such as Pratt & Whitney and Coca-Cola Bottling, as well as community resources such as Willowbrook Early Childhood Center and Hockanum and Shea parks. Goodwin College has the potential to act as an additional neighborhood anchor and employer. To ensure its ongoing stability and attractiveness, the residential character of this neighborhood should be maintained and enhanced. The college now owns a substantial portion of the properties in this area, and has indicated that it plans to retain much of its housing for students and employees. In the future, many of these residential buildings may be appropriate for conversion to professional offices, both college-related and serving the larger community. Such a shift could be an appropriate way to retain the lower-density feel of the neighborhood, but the Town should make every effort to assure that the residential built form remains largely intact, and that potential negative impacts from office conversion are minimized to the greatest extent practicable. Whether the neighborhood remains in the R-4 zone or is brought into the DDD-1 district, the Town may consider a form-based zoning strategy, allowing some office-related uses as well as residences, so long as the original form of buildings is preserved.

### 4. Enhancing public riverfront access

More development of the Goodwin College area should include continuation of public access on the Connecticut River. Access should be extended northward to link to Great River Park, and southward to the Putnam Bridge. Consideration should also be given to partnering with the college to provide access to existing docks along this portion of the river. The college has restored some of these docks for its programmatic use, but a public function could be included, promoting active recreation like fishing and kayaking.



**Riverfront docks at Goodwin College offer public access opportunities.**

*BFJ Planning*

### 5. Leverage key sites for mixed-use development

Several sites in the Goodwin College area are ideal for future mixed-use development. The first are the properties on the western side of Main Street flanking Ensign Street. The college owns the two lots on the southwest corner of the intersection; the properties to the northwest remain in private ownership, but the college has expressed interest in acquiring them. Goodwin College's vision is for this intersection to be a gateway into its campus, with new buildings and signage to create a distinctive entrance. While the ground floor of new buildings on Main Street should have a strong commercial character, this location would be a good fit for college-related office/residential uses, possibly at somewhat higher density given the presence of the Pratt & Whitney complex across Main Street.



Another key site is the property owned by the college at the Ensign Street/Riverside Drive intersection. The college presently envisions this area as accommodating a range of uses including a restaurant, dock, community space, potential commercial or residential uses and public waterfront access. Such development would help to further anchor and activate this portion of the riverfront, creating more of a connection from Main Street along Ensign. The main consideration is to ensure public visibility and access to the river, so that future development does not act to block the neighborhood from the waterfront.

A final key area is Pratt & Whitney's Willgoos site. Any future redevelopment of this property, now undergoing environmental remediation, should entail a varied mix of uses and waterfront amenities, including continuation of the riverwalk, that link it to the nearby mobile home community and potential open space uses to the south. Sidewalks should be provided, and the Town may consider extension of streets through the property to establish a grid system rather than a "superblock" form of development. This will help to ensure active street frontages and a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

## **11.4 Rentschler Field/Silver Lane**

### **11.4.1 Rentschler Field**

The approximately 1,000-acre Rentschler Field property represents one of East Hartford's greatest areas of development potential (see Figure 40). Since the closure of the former airfield in 1995 by United Technologies Corporation (UTC), the site has been the focus of master planning activities. In 2006, UTC joined with a master developer to create an overall site plan encompassing a mix of uses to accompany the 6 million-square-foot Pratt & Whitney office and manufacturing complex remaining on the western portion of the property (see Figure 41). Under that plan and as approved under to the Design Development District I (DDD-1) Zone regulations, the University of Connecticut constructed its 40,000-seat football stadium in 2002, and the outdoor recreation retailer Cabela's opened a flagship store in 2007. These uses, together with the Pratt & Whitney complex and a designated 130-acre wildlife preserve, make up about half of the site, leaving some 500 acres remaining for additional development.

The property is approved for a total of 7.8 million square feet of new development, including 1 million square feet of retail/restaurant use, 1 million square feet of office/research space, up to 3,000 residential units throughout the site and hotel and conference centers. Retail was meant to focus around a central boulevard, culminating in a 12-acre artificial lake flanked by restaurants and an amphitheater. The Master Plan also included a new vehicular connection with Main Street, south of Pratt & Whitney, and extension of the Charter Oak Greenway (see Chapter 5).

In 2013, citing unmet regional demand for outlet malls, the Rentschler Field master developer signed a letter of intent with a national commercial developer for an outlet center to be located

generally in the central portion of the site, encompassing about 400,000 square feet on 40 acres. A 300-unit residential component is also envisioned, to serve the existing and future workforce of the site. The master developer continues to negotiate with other potential commercial and entertainment-related tenants for the Rentschler Field property.

The outlet center concept could provide a lucrative niche for East Hartford. Adjacent municipalities offer an array of traditional shopping centers, but the closest outlets are in southern Connecticut, along I-95. Development of an outlet facility could also bring jobs for many East Hartford residents, and provide greater shopping and dining options.

However, this Plan recommends that the Town support two alternatives in the event that the outlet center scenario is not implemented. The first option, previously advanced by UTC, would promote complementary uses to the existing Pratt & Whitney complex. This option would likely involve a mix of office, research and light industrial uses, capitalizing on good highway access and ample potential footprints. This option could also include hotels/conference centers and a residential component, although housing would need to be well-buffered from the office/industrial uses.

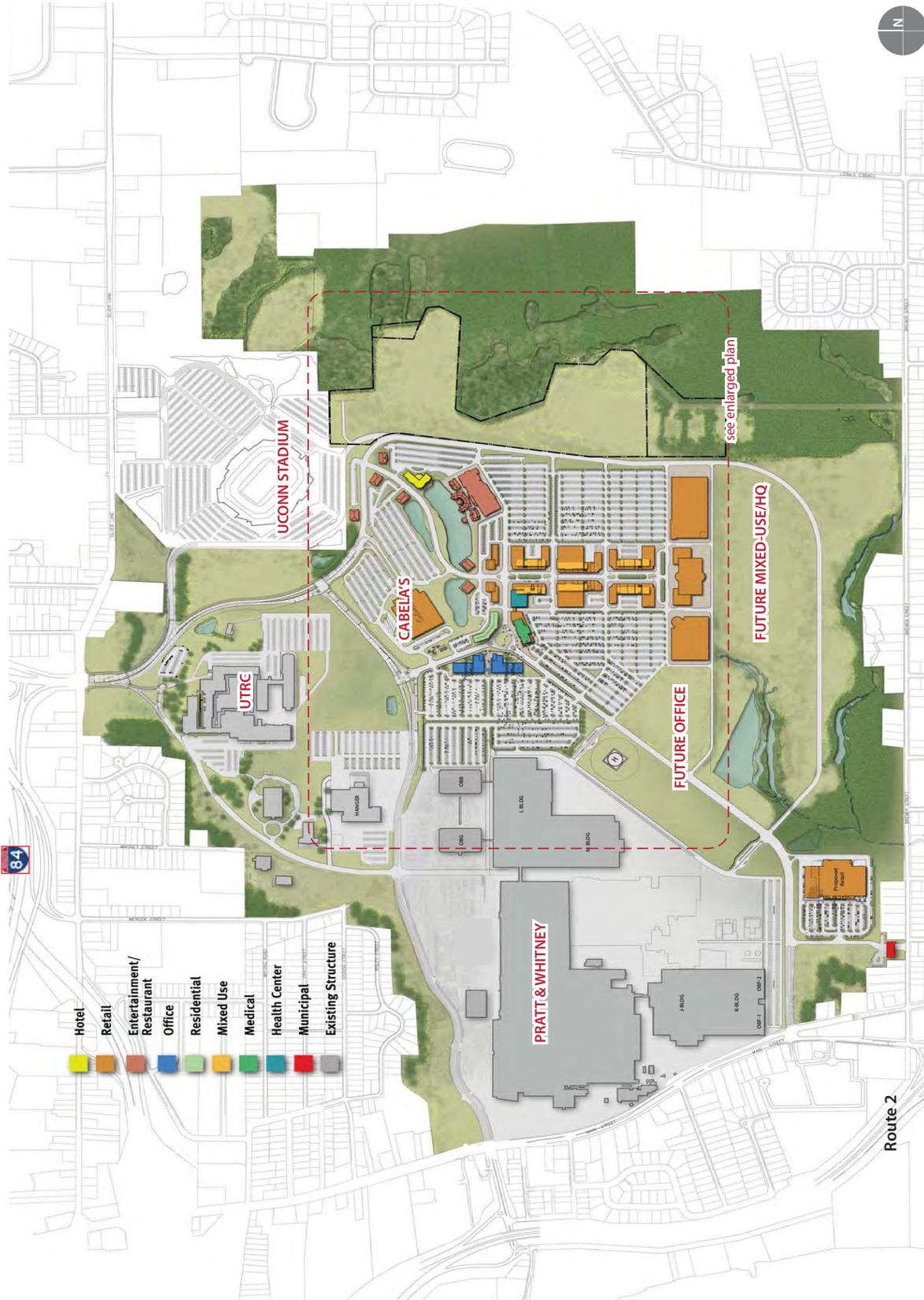
A second option would be closer to the Town's 2006 Master Plan for Rentschler Field, embodying a range of uses and amenities, with a more mixed-use character than the other alternatives. While this option represents an attractive goal from a planning standpoint, its implementation may be limited by the current local and regional real estate market, in particular the weak housing market. Nonetheless, the Town may continue to consider the Master Plan option, or components of it, as an overall goal for Rentschler Field.

Any redevelopment of the property should involve enhancing vehicular as well as pedestrian connectivity. A southern access point is indicated on the Master Plan, to connect with Main Street just south of the Pratt & Whitney complex. This Plan recommends a second access to the south of the site, to connect with Brewer Street (see the Future Land Use Plan in Chapter 12). Such a connection would provide a much-needed link to Rentschler Field from neighborhoods in the southern and eastern portions of East Hartford. The exact location of a secondary southern access link would be based on avoidance of wetland areas and minimizing potential negative impacts to adjacent homes along Brewer Street.



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FIGURE 40: RENTSCHLER FIELD - AERIAL



**ARROWSTREET**  
Architecture  
Urban Design  
Interior Design  
Graphics and Interiors

**TMG**  
The Mattos Group

**United Technologies**

**RENTSCHLER FIELD DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**  
A Division of  
United Technologies Corporation &  
The Mattos Group

**RENTSCHLER FIELD DEVELOPMENT**  
East Hartford, Connecticut

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT**

**FIGURE 41: RENTSCHLER FIELD - MASTER PLAN**

### **11.4.2 Silver Lane**

Silver Lane is a major mixed-use corridor running from Main Street south of I-84 to the Manchester Town line. The roadway, containing an eclectic range of residential and commercial uses, runs along I-84 and the Hockanum River to the north and the Pratt & Whitney complex to the south, providing access to Rentschler Field, I-84 and the key north-south arterials of Simmons Road/Hillside Street and Forbes Street. The corridor also includes major recreational and open space assets, such as Shea Park, the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Club and the DiPietro passive open space property, as well as agricultural properties at its eastern end.

Silver Lane was studied extensively as part of the 2003 POCD. Many of the recommendations of that analysis concerned the eventual full development of Rentschler Field. Other key recommendations included:

- Exploring roadway modifications, including a potential widening to five lanes, to improve traffic flows, especially between Simmons Road and Forbes Street.
- Supporting the proposed extension of the Charter Oak Greenway to connect with the Riverwalk trail network through the Silver Lane corridor.
- Addressing commercial vacancies through innovative approaches that could include options on development parcels at favorable prices in exchange for promotion and assistance by the Town, as well as infrastructure improvements.
- Working with commercial property owners to promote building reinvestment.
- Aggressively enforcing building maintenance and fire codes.
- Considering buffering, landscaping and screening options to ease the visual transition between residential and commercial/industrial properties and enhance urban design.
- Looking at site design regulations to limit excessive curb cuts and reduce impervious surface area.
- Reviewing the appropriateness of the B-1, I-2 and I-3 zones in the corridor, given the type and scale of existing development.

Each of the above recommendations remains valid, based on identified needs and further study.

### Existing Land Use

Land uses along Silver Lane vary greatly in type, scale and intensity (Figure 42). West of Route 15 (Wilbur Cross Highway), the corridor is heavily residential, including a significant concentration of multifamily uses. Continuing eastward to Roberts Lane, uses are more mixed, including commercial and office as well as residential, with low- to medium-density housing found to the south. The area between Roberts Lane and Forbes Street contains the greatest commercial concentration, with three large strip commercial complexes located on the northern side. However, this part of the corridor also contains a substantial number of vacant and underutilized properties, including large portions of shopping centers. It also includes a newly developed age-restricted subdivision, Phillips Farm, as well as the Pratt & Whitney recreational fields. East of Forbes Street, the character of Silver Lane shifts noticeably and becomes much more residential in nature and includes passive recreational and educational uses.

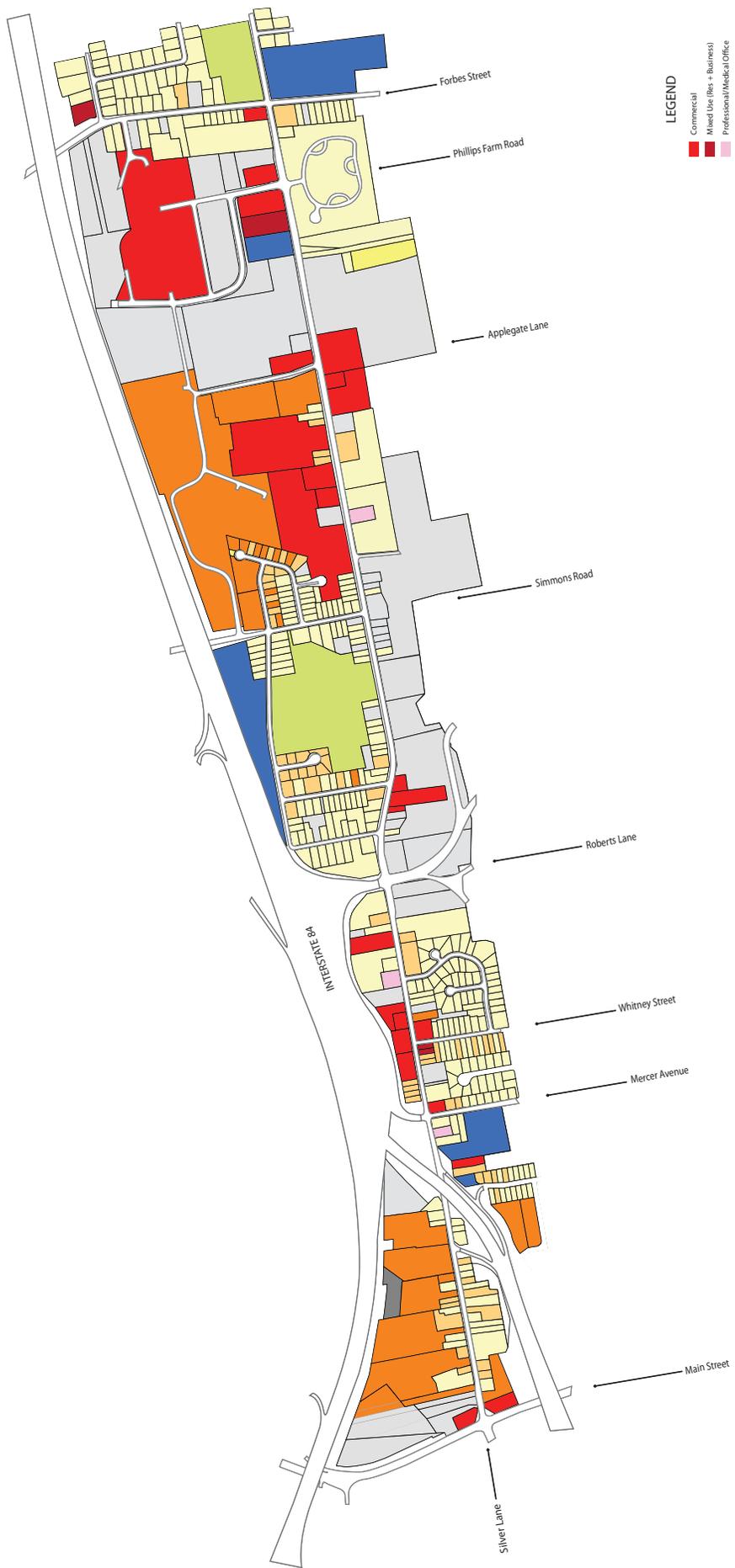


Land uses on Silver Lane include (clockwise from top left) single- and two-family residential, multifamily and traditional strip commercial development.

*BFJ Planning*

### Zoning

As with land uses, zoning along the Silver Lane corridor is eclectic, representing a range of zoning districts (see Figure 43). All residential districts except the lowest-density R-1 and R-6 mobile home district are found, as are several of the business districts (B-1A, B-1 and B-2) and the I-2 and I-3 industrial zones. In addition, two design development districts are mapped, corresponding to Rentschler Field and adjacent properties (DDD-1) and the Phillips Farm age-restricted subdivision (DDD-2), and one Incentive Development Zone (IDZ) is indicated for the parcel containing Dunkin Donuts on the northern side of Silver Lane.



- LEGEND**
- Commercial
  - Mixed Use (Res + Business)
  - Professional/Medical Office
  - Single Family Residential
  - 3-Family Residential
  - Multi-Family Residential
  - Institutional (Government)
  - Open Space
  - Vacant
  - Transportation

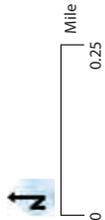


FIGURE 42: SILVER LANE - LAND USE



FIGURE 43: SILVER LANE ZONING

Source: BfJ Planning





Charter Oak Mall appears to be well used.



Strong residential core: Phillips Farm above, and single-family homes, below.  
*BFJ Planning*



### Issues and Opportunities

The Silver Lane corridor contains a number of assets that greatly enhance its potential for redevelopment shown in the images below. The area has excellent access to the regional highway system as well as to the rest of East Hartford. In addition, the proximity to Rentschler Field creates economic spillover possibilities stemming from current and anticipated future development there. Silver Lane is also well-served by transit, with numerous bus stops located along the corridor, though more stops could include shelters. Several key commercial uses in the area appear to be successful and have seen recent reinvestment, such as the Stop and Shop at the Charter Oak Mall. Finally, Silver Lane has a strong residential core that provides a consumer population for additional commercial uses. The neighborhoods to the east of Forbes Street are attractive and well-maintained, and many individual homes all along the corridor have been upgraded by their owners, while the new Phillips Farm subdivision provides an example of the type of infill residential development that should be encouraged.

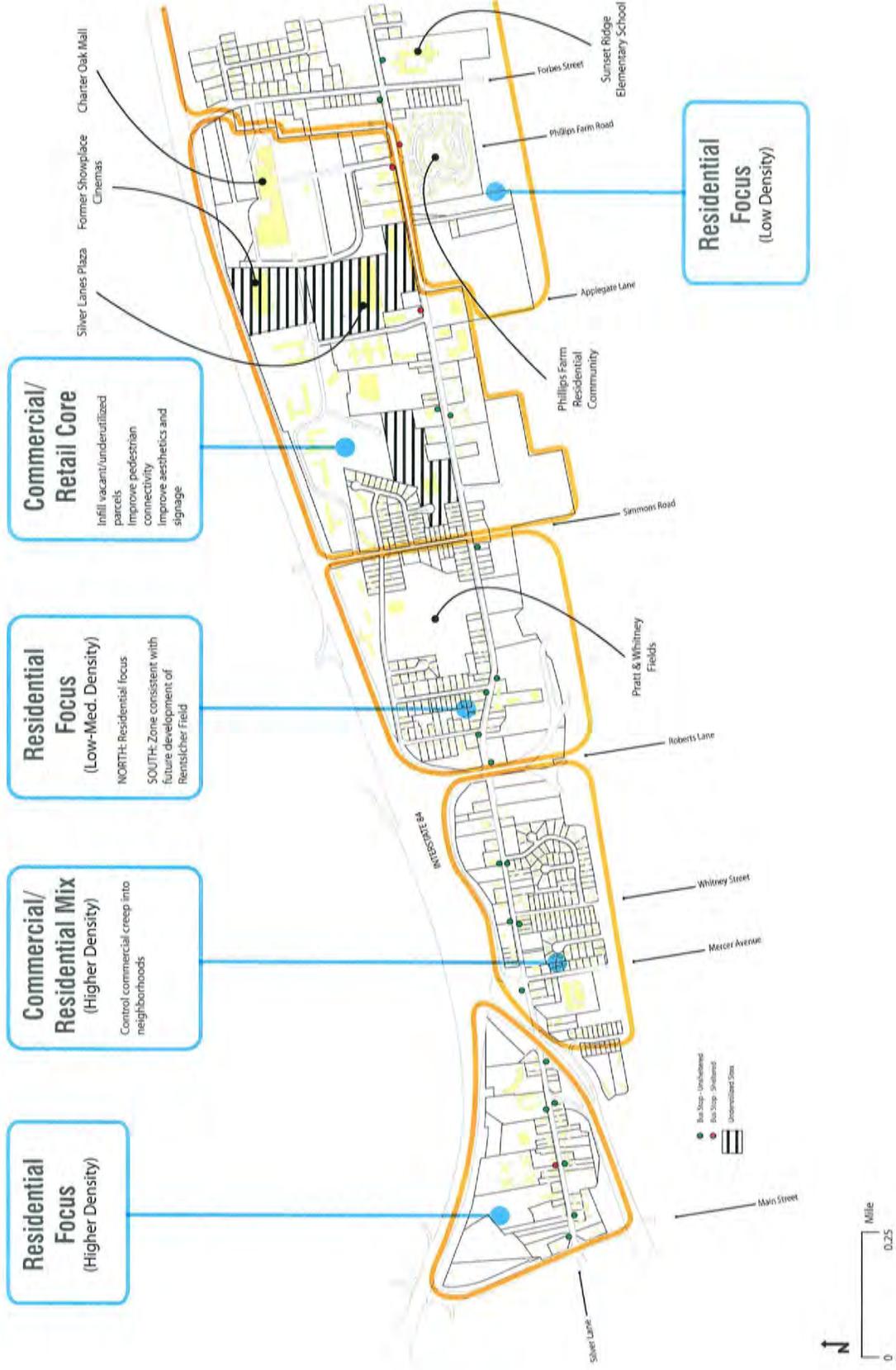
Silver Lane also faces significant challenges, the most important of which is the large number of vacant and underutilized properties, especially between Simmonds Road and Forbes Street. Many of the strip shopping centers lie completely or largely vacant, in need of substantial reinvestment to make them attractive to tenants, while large vacant parcels create gaps in the urban fabric. Redevelopment of underutilized sites and infill development of vacant areas is needed to raise the level of activity along the corridor and generate business for commercial uses. One constraint to infill development that will need to be considered is the wetland area south of Charter Oak Mall.

As indicated in Figure 44, this POCD envisions large portions of the Silver Lane corridor retaining their residential use and character. The commercial core should be located primarily along the northern side of the street, generally between Simmons Road and Forbes Street, while the portion on both sides of Silver Lane between Mercer Avenue and Roberts Lane is suggested as a commercial/residential mix, with the commercial uses carefully controlled so that they do not intrude into the adjacent neighborhoods. The rest of Silver Lane would have a residential focus, ranging from high-density at the west to low-density at the central and eastern portions.



Examples of constraints along Silver Lane: at top, vacant buildings in need of reinvestment; at bottom left, weak pedestrian connections; at bottom right, outdated signage.

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FIGURE 44: SILVER LANE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Much of the zoning along Silver Lane is inconsistent with either existing or desired land uses. As noted in the 2002 Silver Lane Corridor Report, the B-1 zone, mapped for the Charter Oak Mall and former Showplace Cinema, is not in keeping with their big-box nature. The B-1A zone, which encompasses much of the rest of Silver Lane in this vicinity and requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, is more appropriate. However, the B-1A zone may not be the best fit for the vacant parcel west of the Phillips Farm subdivision; a residential zone is perhaps more consistent with the character of this part of the corridor, and could promote redevelopment of this parcel, possibly through a floating zone. Finally, the Town should review the appropriateness of industrial zones along Silver Lane. No industrial uses presently exist; all properties mapped as I-2 or I-3 are commercial, residential or vacant. The zoning for these areas should be adjusted to be consistent with future development at Rentschler Field due south.

Silver Lane could be improved in terms of aesthetics, pedestrian-friendliness and enforcement of zoning and building code regulations. Some commercial properties, though functional, are in poor or unattractive condition. Signage throughout the area could be enhanced; much of it is outdated and lacks cohesion. Provision of sidewalks is inconsistent; while generally present along the northern side of the corridor, they are intermittent on the southern side, with gaps on both vacant and developed properties. Sidewalks within shopping centers are limited. In addition, traffic lights with crosswalks should be explored to aid pedestrians. For example, there are few crossing opportunities between Simmons Road and Phillips Farm Road, yet pedestrians were observed jaywalking across Silver Lane in this area, from Silver Lane Plaza to the shopping center across the road. And, despite current zoning, there is evidence that commercial development on Silver Lane is “creeping” into adjacent neighborhoods. Preserving the integrity of residential areas and strength of commercial corridors requires ongoing strict enforcement of existing laws and periodic re-evaluation.



**Commercial creep on Whitney Street, with a former single-family home in the R-4 zone converted to commercial use.**

*BFJ Planning*

### **11.4.3 Summary**

Individually, Rentschler Field and the Silver Lane corridor present significant redevelopment potential, but as an interconnected unit, they show even greater promise. Each can build on assets of the other, while jointly addressing shared issues. For example, redevelopment of Rentschler Field will generate more activity on Silver Lane, while infill development on the corridor will aid Rentschler Field’s success. The well-being of both is crucial to the Town’s overall health, as stronger businesses will create positive economic activity and spillover into the central business district, while improved aesthetics and street life will help nearby residential neighborhoods.



## 12.0 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### 12.1 What is the Future Land Use Plan?

The Future Land Use Plan presented in this chapter (see Figure 45 at the conclusion of the chapter) graphically illustrates general; future land uses in the Town of East Hartford based upon the recommendations made throughout this Plan of Conservation and Development. It provides an overview of preferred land use types and locations consistent with the Town's overarching goals. While the Future Land Use Plan recognizes existing land uses and environmental constraints, it also considers potential future development, infrastructure improvements and economic trends. In many cases, the Future Land Use Plan reflects current land uses. However, in areas where existing land use designations are obsolete or do not represent the highest and best use for an areas as described in this Plan of Conservation and Development, the Future Land Use Plan suggests a new land use designation.

The Future Land Use Plan is not meant to be specific to every parcel. It shows general land use patterns for different geographic areas. For example, an area designated as residential may have specific lots that have retail stores or service establishments. While the existing land use map may pick up these individual uses, the Future Land Use Plan shows the overall land use for the area.

### 12.2 What is the Relationship Between the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning?

The Future Land Use Plan presents an overall picture of the types and locations of different land uses throughout the town. It provides an overview of what kinds of uses should be located where and gives a general indication of the preferred intensity of land use. For example, residential uses in the Future Land Use Plan specify four density classifications: low-density, medium-density, medium high-density and high-density. These classifications provide a conceptual understanding of desired residential densities across the town. In contract, the Town's zoning regulations are much more specific with regard to residential designations. The current Zoning Code includes six residential zoning districts that are differentiated from one another by density and various other factors.

The nexus between the Future Land Use Plan and zoning is that the Future Land Use Plan provides a basis for potential future zoning changes. The POCD is the policy foundation for proposed revisions to the Town's Zoning Code. As explained in the State statutes, a zoning code must be based on a well-reasoned plan. Where proposed uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan are inconsistent with current zoning, a zoning change is warranted. The proposed land uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan are used as a guide for determining new zoning designations for these areas. Such zoning changes are the next step in the planning process and can occur once the POCD has been adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## 12.3 Major Plan Goals

The planning and development goals described in each chapter of this Plan of Conservation and Development are the basis for the land use designations shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Together they describe a framework that encourages preservation of stable neighborhoods, open space and recreation areas; promoting infill development and redevelopment that maximizes economic development potential while ensuring compatibility with the character and scale of surrounding areas; and enhancing and linking key assets; all under the overarching goal of maintaining and improving quality of life for all East Hartford residents. General Plan goals are found in Chapter 1, while goals for specific topics are outlined in other chapters as appropriate.

## 12.4 East Hartford's Future Land Use Plan

As a mature community, the majority of East Hartford's land has already been developed. However, development of the remaining vacant land, infill development and redevelopment of previously built sites in the future can significantly affect the town. In order to support and protect the quality of life as envisioned for the town's future, a balance among development, the conservation of open space and natural resources, and the preservation of historic and cultural resources is necessary. Strategic growth to achieve economic development goals has been a major focus in the crafting of this plan update. At the same time, it is recognized that protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the conservation of open space is necessary to retain East Hartford's character and quality of life. Symmetry among development, conservation and preservation is a primary focus of future land use issues in the town.

### 12.4.1 Residential Land Use Categories

#### ***Low-Density Residential***

Areas having a residential density of 1-3 units per acre. These areas are generally located within the town's southeastern quadrant adjacent to Manchester and Glastonbury and in the northernmost portion of the town adjacent to South Windsor. The majority of the town's remaining developable residential land is located within this land use category. As appropriate, where such land is developed on or adjoining open space or natural resource areas, conservation design principles which incorporate preservation of these assets as part of development should be utilized.

#### ***Medium-Density Residential***

Areas having a residential density of 4-8 units per acre. These land use areas are generally located within the central east/west corridor of the town between I-84 and Tolland Street, the neighborhoods around downtown, off Main Street and just south and northeast of Rentschler Field. Much of this land is currently zoned R-3 and R-4. Little vacant, developable land is available for future development within this land use category. As within the Low-Density Residential land use category, when opportunities to provide open space linkages and/or the

preservation of natural resources present themselves, conservation design principles should be incorporated into development plans.

### ***Medium-High Density Residential***

Areas having a residential density of 9-12 units per acre. These land use areas generally recognize existing residential development patterns. Small pockets of this land use category can be found throughout the town, with the greatest concentration located along Burnside Avenue. Many of the town's existing apartment and condominium complexes are also located within this land use category. Much of this land is currently zoned R-5. Very little land is available for new development within this land use category.

### ***High Density Residential***

Areas having a residential density of 15-17 units per acre. This category recognizes the density of existing residential development within specific areas of town. New residential development at this density currently requires a special permit under zoning and is a likely component of redevelopment initiatives.

## **12.4.2 Non-Residential Land Use Categories**

### ***Mixed-Use Areas***

The goals and recommendations of this POCD support a substantial increase in mixed-use development within East Hartford, particularly in the central business district, at Rentschler Field and along the Connecticut River. This designation is intended to encourage pedestrian activity and activate Town streets. It encompasses a variety of uses including residential, commercial, office and retail, as well as open space. Industrial uses – both light and heavy – are generally not contemplated for areas designated as mixed use. An increase in mixed-use development will promote a lifestyle typical of thriving urbanized areas where residences and related commercial and entertainment uses support one another. In addition, this designation provides flexibility for areas where development or redevelopment is likely or desired to occur, but where the exact nature of such development is not yet known. In such cases, a mixed-use designation provides parameters for investment, while allowing for economic development that is consistent with market conditions.

The Future Land Use Plan shows the central business district along Main Street, Rentschler Field and the riverfront area north and south of I-84 and in the vicinity of Goodwin College as mixed use, indicated in pink. This is a slight change from the Generalized Land Use Plan in the previous POCD, which placed more specific designations on some of these areas. The intent in using a more broad designation is to allow for flexibility in future development of these areas, given that the precise type and scale of development is unknown.

It is important to note that there may be small business clusters throughout East Hartford, particularly along key corridors, that serve their respective neighborhoods as well as a larger clientele in nearby areas. These existing mixed-use clusters may be shown as residential on the Future Land Use Plan, because the Town wishes to preserve the overall residential character of the surrounding area. However, the intent of this POCD is to continue promoting these neighborhood pockets of mixed use, as appropriate to avoid any negative impacts on residences. A residential designation on the Future Land Use Plan is not meant to preclude such a small-scale mix of uses. As discussed above, the map shows generalized land use patterns, and is not parcel-specific.

### ***Commercial***

These areas generally encompass the land along the town's commercial corridors of Silver Lane, Tolland Street, Burnside Avenue and Main Street, with the exception of the central business district. They accommodate uses that are largely retail or service in nature. Most of these land areas are zoned B-1, B-1A or B-2. Within these commercial corridors, specific design standards and controls will be implemented to mitigate potential conflicts between commercial uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods, address traffic and circulation issues and encourage reinvestment in the building stock.

### ***Heavy Industry***

This area encompasses the western portion of Rentschler Field and reflects the current usage by Pratt & Whitney. The area is currently zoned I-3, which is the Town's least restrictive industrial district. This land use classification has been reduced since the prior POCD to reflect the removal of the Pratt & Whitney Willgoos site along the Connecticut River as an active industrial use. That property has been designated as mixed use.

### ***Light Industry***

This designation represents areas that are or are intended to be developed for light manufacturing, fabrication, distribution or warehousing uses. They are generally located along the Park Avenue/Tolland Street corridor, along railroad rights-of-way extending from Park Avenue to the Town of South Windsor, along Roberts Street and along Main Street south of I-84.

### ***Institutional***

This classification includes Town facilities such as schools, senior centers and other municipal uses; State and Federal lands and private institutional property.

### ***Open Space***

These areas represent the current network of open space and recreation areas of the town. They include publicly and privately owned active and passive recreation and open space areas. Active recreational uses such as parks, playgrounds, golf courses and ballfields and passive areas including greenways, cemeteries, Town-owned floodplains and flood control properties are all designated as open space areas on the Future Land Use Plan.

This Future Land Use Plan does not specify which parcels designated as open space are most desirable in terms of potential Town acquisition. The open space chapter of this POCD clearly specifies the criteria for open space acquisition, and any such acquisition will need to be based on whether those criteria are met, as well as current market and fiscal conditions.

### **Potential New Roadways**

Two potential extensions of existing roadways are shown on the Future Land Use Plan. The approved Master Plan for Rentschler Field incorporates a southern road connection at Main Street, just south of the Pratt & Whitney complex. This Plan recommends a second access point, to connect with Brewer Street. The exact location of this additional connection would depend largely on the specific development pattern occurring in that portion of Rentschler Field and engineering aspects of Brewer Street (e.g. sight distances, signal timing), as well as the need to minimize potential negative impacts on the adjacent residential neighborhood and environmentally sensitive areas.

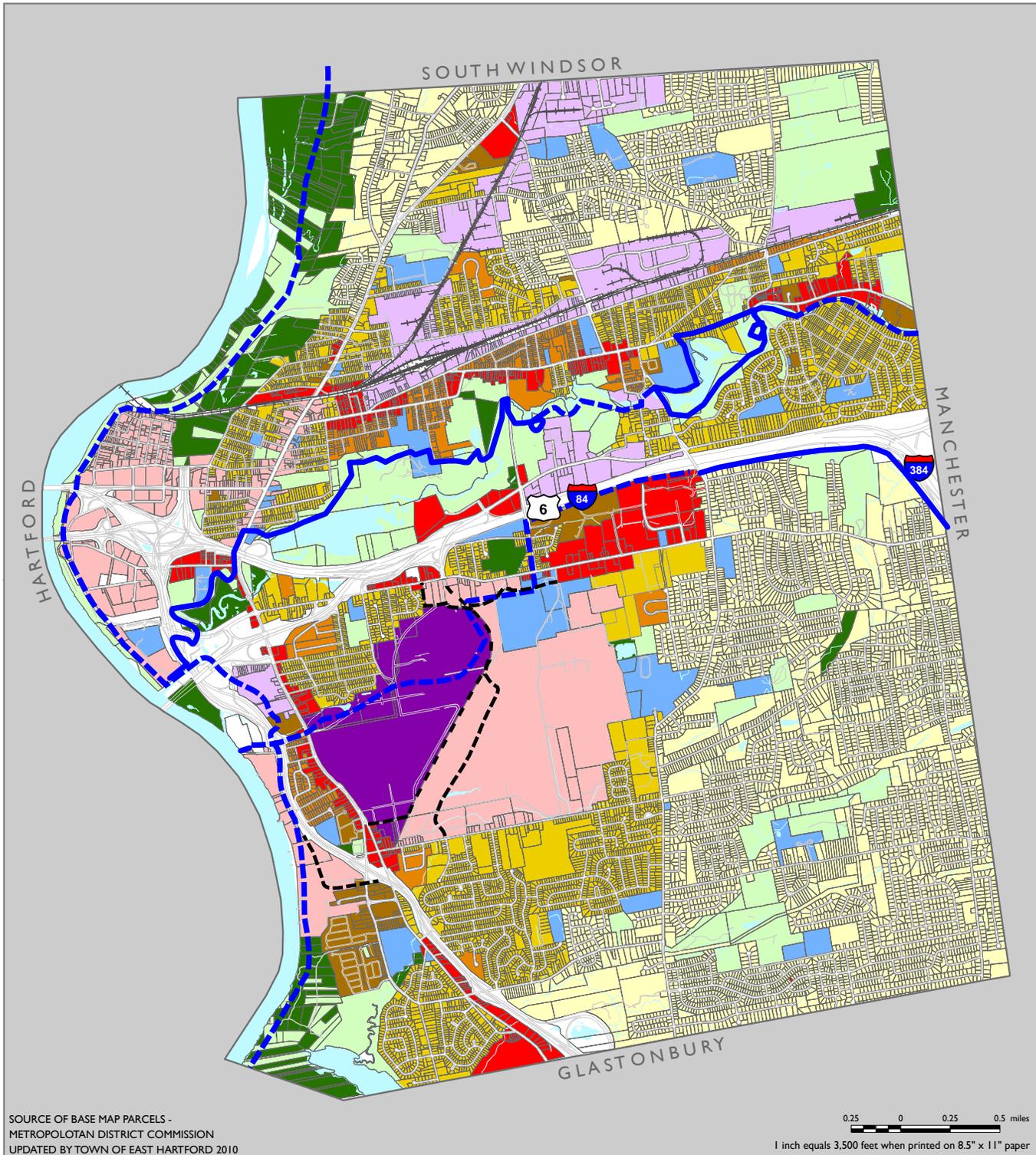
In addition, the Future Land Use Plan indicates an extension of Riverside Drive southward to connect with Pent Road, consistent with the college's approved Master Plan, to provide additional access from the Goodwin College/riverfront area to Main Street and Route 2 via High Street.

## **12.5 Relationship to the State Plan**

Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes sets the standards for municipal plans of conservation and development. One provision of the State Statute is that municipalities take into account the State Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies. **Error! Reference source not found.** illustrates the Land Classifications for East Hartford according to the State's Conservation and Development Policies Plan for 2013-2018.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the State Plan of Conservation and Development has designated the majority of the town as either a Priority Funding Area or a Balanced Priority Funding Area. Conservation Areas are designated along the Hockanum and Connecticut River corridors, while existing Protected Lands and the Town's local historic district are also indicated. In addition, East Hartford is designated as a Regional Center.

East Hartford's Future Land Use Plan is consistent with the general guidance provided by the State Plan.



**Legend**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Low Density Residential         |  Open Space Corridor |
|  Medium Density Residential      |  Potential Roads     |
|  Medium High Density Residential |   |
|  High Density Residential        |   |
|  Commercial                      |   |
|  Mixed Use                       |   |
|  Light Industry                  |   |
|  Heavy Industry                  |   |
|  Public Institutional            |   |
|  Existing Open Space             |   |
|  Desired Open Space              |   |

THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FOR USE AS A  
PLANNING DOCUMENT. DELINEATIONS MAY  
NOT BE EXACT.

**Generalized Land Use Plan**

Plan of Conservation & Development  
East Hartford, Connecticut

Prepared By  
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115 5th Avenue, New York, NY October 2013

## **13.0 ACTION AGENDA**

TO BE COMPLETED